

ASYMMETRIC CAMPAIGNING AS A RATIONAL CHOICE:  
PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

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General Studies

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## ABSTRACT

ASYMMETRIC CAMPAIGNING AS A RATIONAL CHOICE, PLANNING  
CONSIDERATIONS, by MAJ Erik A. Claessen, 110 pages.

There is no shortage of people who disagree with the current state of world affairs and who are prepared to use violence to change them. Are they mindless fanatics, doomed to fail? Or do they have a clever and covert plan with reasonable chance of success? One way to find out is to look at the problem of fighting an overwhelmingly stronger country from the perspective of someone whose aim is to change the current state of world affairs with deadly force if necessary. From this proposition flows the primary research question of this thesis: Is it possible to produce an asymmetric campaign concept sufficiently feasible to constitute a rational course of action against an overwhelmingly stronger opponent? Such a concept requires: first, analysis of the centers of gravity of the asymmetric actor and of the powerful country opposing him; second, the development of a course of action that protects his own center of gravity while attacking that of the opponent; and finally, an assessment of the prerequisites and chances for success. Important changes in the nature of immigration and politics caused by modern transportation and communication technologies have greatly altered the prerequisites and chances for success of campaign concepts that choose the space between human ears as the battlefield.

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## ACRONYMS

ANC	African National Congress
CC	Critical Capability
CG	Center of gravity
CL	Civilian Leadership
CR	Critical Requirement
CV	Critical Vulnerability
EZLN	Ejército Zapatista de Liberación National
IRA	Irish Republican Army
KLA	Kosovo Liberation Army
LDK	Democratic League of Kosovo
LLC	Leadership Leading the Campaign
LOO	Lines Of Operation
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OPC	Overwhelmingly Powerful Country
PLO	Palestinian Liberation Organization
PDMM	Political Decision Making Machine
USA	United States of America



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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

We can assume that our enemies and future adversaries have learned from the Gulf War.<sup>1</sup>

The National Defense Panel

#### Introduction

On 1 March 1991 something became clear to every dictator in this world: no matter how much you invested in hardware for symmetrical warfare, there was no guaranty that such expenditure assured either victory in combat or retention of power. A regime with the fourth largest inventory of weapons and vehicles in the world for symmetrical warfare had lost most of that inventory within one hundred hours. Destruction came from an overwhelmingly powerful force. This overwhelming power flowed not only from the capability to detect every armed element above a very low detection threshold, and to destroy the detected elements with great precision, but also from the capacity to project these two capabilities anywhere in the world. Regimes that derived their power from large conventional forces understood that they either had to examine other alternatives or that they had to behave in a more acceptable way. Other actors on the international scene, including peoples, minority groups, or other organizations that relied on regimes with large conventional armies either to gain independence, to spread an ideology, or to give shelter, understood that these regimes were now severely limited in their capacities and capabilities.

It is logical to assume that some actors on the international scene, whether peoples, minority groups, or other organizations, will likely remain dissatisfied with a

world order that is dominated by one, or a few overwhelmingly powerful countries (OPCs). Those dissatisfied with the status quo also understand that it is suicidal to use symmetrical warfare to oppose an OPC. This situation leaves them basically with two options. The first is to abandon opposition altogether or to limit opposition to a kind of passive hostility. The second option is to oppose an OPC in an asymmetric way. Several factors determine whether some actors will choose the second option. One significant factor is how dissatisfied they are with the current world order and how strongly they believe in one or another alternative. Another factor is the probability of success. The higher the probability of success and the more rational the asymmetric choice, the greater becomes the likelihood that actors will choose this form of fighting an OPC. In other words, actors will base their choices on dissatisfaction with the current world order, on the strength of their belief in alternatives, and on the feasibility of a concept for waging a campaign to attain their objectives.

### Purpose

The purpose of this thesis is to analyze whether or not it is possible to produce a feasible concept for waging an asymmetric campaign. Is an asymmetric campaign a dead-end struggle for mindless fanatics, doomed to fail? Or is it a rational choice that promises success in a fight against an overwhelmingly stronger opponent? Answers to these questions in large part depend on the capacity to produce a feasible campaign plan and to execute it.

### Research Question

The primary research question of this thesis is: Is it possible to produce an asymmetric campaign concept sufficiently feasible to constitute a rational course of action against an overwhelmingly stronger opponent?

To answer this question, several secondary questions must be addressed. First, what is asymmetrical campaigning and what are its key concepts? Second, why does it appear to be new and different? Third, what are the characteristics of the environment in which it can thrive? Fourth, what do victory and defeat really mean in an asymmetric context? Fifth, how can an asymmetric opponent realize the conditions that will impose his will upon the OPC in an asymmetric campaign? Finally, how can the feasibility of an asymmetric campaign plan be assessed?

### Background and Significance

The significance of the study derives from the increased probability that future conflicts will be asymmetric in character. The American military machine has become so efficient that it can deal summarily with any opponent that chooses to fight in a symmetrical way. As a consequence, the most likely foe that the USA and its allies will encounter on the battlefield is an asymmetric opponent.

However, the fact that the next conflict will probably be asymmetrical in nature is in itself not particularly significant or alarming. Perhaps the asymmetric opponent can be dealt with even more summarily than a symmetrical one. Or perhaps an asymmetrical campaign is just something that drags on indefinitely without ever producing a favorable result for the initiator. And is asymmetry really new? A literature review shows that this question arouses considerable debate. Many publications assert that “asymmetrical” only

means “different” and that as such, it is not new at all. Furthermore, another agreed upon characteristic of asymmetry in warfare, namely the attempt by the weak to offset the superior strength of the strong by exploiting the latter’s weaknesses, is as old as war itself. This thesis holds that contemporary asymmetry is new and different because the environment in which it now can thrive is new and different.

An example can clarify this assertion. Consider the actions of the French, Belgian, or Dutch resistance in German-occupied territory. By the definitions of most authors on the subject, it is safe to consider these actions asymmetrical. However, they were not very successful because the environment was not very suitable for such actions. Resistance fighters could not move around freely in their own countries, let alone cross borders. Fighters could not communicate with each other by telephone without the risk of being overheard, and they could not gather freely to discuss actions. It was virtually impossible to buy weapons or ingredients to produce bombs. Instead, resistance fighters had to rely on aerial deliveries of weapons from allied aircraft. Communications with London occurred at a “speed” of ten to twenty words per minute, and resistance fighters could be located during the process. It was unthinkable to carry out actions in Germany because local authorities would immediately identify the outsiders as foreigners and check on them. Furthermore, because there were no large French immigrant organizations in Germany to provide safe houses and other support, resistance fighters were unable to establish a permanent presence there. Moving money around, converting it from one currency to another, or hiding it from authorities was problematic at best. Furthermore, the German authorities did not have any legal, electoral, humanitarian, informational or diplomatic constraints. Hitler did not have to be re-elected. There were no weekly polls to

show his rising or declining popularity. German spouses did not tie yellow ribbons around trees. German radio talk shows did not feature retired World War I generals to comment and criticize the actions of Rommel and von Rundstedt. Displacing or killing millions of people were acceptable methods. There was no political opposition to suggest and support one or another exit-strategy. It is also doubtful that Hitler would address the Nation and change his policies even if the Belgian resistance had succeeded in killing 2,000 Germans in a single action. In fact, his staff would possibly not even have awakened him if such an action had happened during the night.

Whether or not asymmetry is new in warfare is an endless discussion of is only remote relevance to this thesis. Yet, most people would agree that globalization is new. Few doubt the fact that the government of the United States now faces a bigger liability in the world and more and stricter constraints on the use of armed force than a twentieth-century Kaiser, Fuehrer, or Great Helmsman. So asymmetry within the contemporary context is new, and that is what this thesis is about. This thesis explores how the weak actor can use some aspects of globalization to his advantage and how he can exploit the OPC's responsibilities and constraints in order to produce a feasible asymmetric campaign concept. The significance of this study lies in the fact that it encourages the military establishment to look more carefully at the vulnerability inherent in the politico-military seams during a conflict. Further, this thesis seeks to enable the OPC to achieve recognition, anticipation and adaptation with regard to asymmetric actors' actions.

### The Research Material

The sources of research material for this thesis are books and articles on asymmetric warfare. Especially important are theoretical and doctrinal treatments of

insurgency and counterinsurgency. Current world events have evoked interest in these subjects and spawned many publications. However, these publications are mostly devoted to questions about the nature of asymmetric warfare and the extent to which it is new and different. The research materials that primarily focus on these questions can help to clearly define asymmetric campaigning in the context of this study, but the same materials are not particularly useful in answering other secondary questions. Publications that provide analysis about which factors make asymmetric campaigning possible and attractive are more relevant to this thesis.

Concerning the OPC, these factors include everything that makes the OPC look incapable of assuming its liability and everything that constrains the OPC from using its overwhelming power. Various documents on asymmetric warfare provide in-depth analysis on these factors.

Factors about the asymmetric opponent include everything that puts him out of reach of the OPC's power and everything that allows him to move, act and communicate, despite the OPC's power. Many of these factors are linked to globalization, so publications on globalization are a second important source of research material. There is no shortage of literature on this subject. Again, discussions about the exact definition of globalization and whether it is new and different are but marginally relevant to this thesis. This thesis uses only publications on the subject to highlight the aspects that might favor asymmetric campaigning. These aspects include large scale migration, cheap air travel, satellite TV, the internet, cell phones, GPS and related technologies and means. One of the practical consequences of globalization is the possibility for a person to travel to the other side of the world in one day and to move, act and communicate in the middle of an



OPC without being immediately and automatically singled out as an odd and possibly dangerous foreigner. One needs only to compare this new reality to the situation confronting members of a resistance movement in nazi-occupied territory to see some advantages of globalization to asymmetric campaigning. Another consequence of globalization is the possibility to retain one's culture as a first-generation immigrant or to rediscover one's cultural identity as a next-generation immigrant. Modern communications technology can work both ways. It can turn the world into a global village, but it also provides every village the opportunity to be global.

A third category of research material pertains to recent history. Theory alone is insufficient to develop this thesis. Some of the data needed to answer the research questions can be found by studying events that have occurred relatively recently in places like Somalia, Kosovo, Kurdistan, Chechnya, South Africa, Northern Ireland, and Palestine. African National Congress militants and Irish Republican Army-Sinn Fein members now sit as members of governments. NATO aircraft conducted air operations over Kosovo. There was an exit without a strategy in Somalia and Rwanda. Kurdish fighters are considered allies by Americans and terrorists by Turks. The Israelis have moved out of Lebanon and the Gaza Strip. Armenian immigrants in the USA try to prevent the election of pro-Turkish congressmen, and so on. Information about such developments can be gathered from the internet archives of newspapers and magazines. However, while doing this, it is crucial to verify the reliability and validity of both sources and data. It is better to disregard sources that are more interested in serving a political, social or religious cause than in objective reporting. Furthermore, it is necessary

to focus more on the event than on the significance that an author wants to attribute to that event.

### The Research Method

The goal of the research method is to provide a means for analyzing the research material in order to answer the primary and secondary research questions. The method is explained in detail in chapter 3. In summary, the method consists of four steps.

In the first step, a literature review provides materials for the analysis to determine the main contemporary viewpoints on asymmetric warfare. This survey makes it possible to define asymmetric campaigning and to explain why it appears to be something new and different. This review also identifies the aspects of globalization that impact on the asymmetric opponent's ability to wage an asymmetric campaign. Finally, this review determines the extent of a contemporary OPC's liability in the world and its constraints on the use of armed force.

In the second step recent events serve to provide supporting data to answer the other secondary questions. The resulting answers delineate the elements to produce an asymmetric campaign concept. First, it is necessary to clearly define what victory and defeat really mean in asymmetric conflict. Second, the characteristics of the asymmetric opponent and of the OPC have to be analyzed to determine the respective centers of gravity, along with the critical capabilities, requirements, and vulnerabilities. These elements make it possible to identify the problem for the asymmetric opponent and its solution in terms of ends, ways, means, and lines of operations.

In a third step, the feasibility of the campaign concept undergoes assessment assessed. This process borrows from the US strategy for dealing with asymmetric threats

to determine the way the OPC will oppose the actor. The final step answers the research question on the basis of the analytical results from the first three steps.

### Assumptions

The main assumption of this thesis is that rationality is relevant to a study of asymmetric campaigning. Is it logical to assume that people who use utterly amoral ways and means to reach their ends base their decisions on rational grounds? The answer is probably yes. One has to distinguish between the motivation of a person to act and the way he plans how to act. The motivation of serial killers, for example, is completely repulsive and incomprehensible. However, the way they commit their crimes can be very intelligent and logical. Because they are serial killers, they must have feasible plans to avoid arrest. They want to kill a lot of people, not to kill once and be arrested. The second assumption is that one is able to assume the perspective of someone who is planning an asymmetric campaign. This is probably a reasonable assumption. By gathering and analyzing facts and by applying the logic inherent in critical reasoning, it is possible to produce a campaign concept. Motivation and opinions can differ, but facts and logic, when pared down to their basics, remain largely the same for everyone. Even if this assertion is not necessarily the case, asymmetric actors must in the end contend with larger rational elements within the overall campaign picture and process.

### Delimitations

There are several delimitations to the scope of this thesis. First, this thesis does not treat the history of asymmetric campaigning and does not analyze how and why asymmetric campaigning evolved from other forms of warfare. Second, it considers only

the case of a very weak actor who faces an overwhelmingly powerful country, and who can use only an asymmetric approach. Asymmetric techniques can also be used in a conflict between peer competitors, but this variation is not what this thesis is about. Third, as mentioned in the assumptions, this thesis accepts the proposition that the rational planning process is separate from the sometimes irrational motivation and opinions of the actors. Finally, this thesis concerns only the planning process and only examines the possibility of producing a feasible concept for an asymmetric campaign. The goal is not to predict what the next terrorist action will look like.

### Limitations

There is a limitation concerning the research method. The research governing method is based on gathering data from open sources. Detailed intelligence reports or interviews with people involved in asymmetric campaigning would provide more and possibly more relevant, accurate, and representative data. However, for obvious reasons, such data are inaccessible. Yet, this limitation does not make it impossible to answer the research question because of the delimitations associated with the content of the thesis. The thesis pertains only to general planning considerations for asymmetric campaigning. As mentioned above, it is not the goal to determine where, when, and how suicide terrorists will strike next. Nor does this thesis intend to establish a psychological profile for a suicide terrorist. If these were the goals, the research method would be inadequate. However, many of open sources indicate that suicide terrorists find application in asymmetric campaigns. Such campaigns have had a serious impact on Israeli policies in occupied territories in Lebanon, Gaza and the West Bank. So, the research method is

adequate to prove that suicide terrorists constitute a cheap method with a large impact on the policies of an overwhelmingly stronger opponent.

### Definitions

Actor (on the international scene): An actor on the international scene is an organization that is capable of shaping world events through significant actions.

Asymmetric Campaigning: Waging a campaign in a way that is intended to offset the overwhelmingly superior strength of the opponent by operating below the detection threshold of his armed forces, by exploiting his liability and his legal, diplomatic, humanitarian or electoral constraints on the use of force, and by not accepting any such constraints on one's own actions.

Campaign: A campaign is a planned effort to reach one's strategic objectives in a conflict with an opponent. It links available ends, ways, and means in a conceptual way in order to realize the conditions that enable one to impose his will upon the opponent. Campaigns are aimed at transforming a current situation into a desired end state despite the opponent's countervailing efforts. Campaign planning takes the opponent's and one's own strengths and weaknesses into account and organizes actions in space and time in such a way that they lead logically from the current situation to the desired end state.

Detection Threshold: Armed forces use all manner of devices and methods to find and identify an enemy force. The detection threshold is the smallest enemy force that can be found and identified by these devices and methods.

Significant: An action against an OPC is significant if it causes major policy changes, the commitment or withdrawal of large forces, or the mobilization of large resources.

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<sup>1</sup>National Defense Panel, *Transforming Defense: National Security in the 21st Century* (Washington, DC: December 1997), 11.

## CHAPTER 2

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

True asymmetries . . . are *those actions that an adversary can exercise that you either cannot or will not.*<sup>1</sup>

Roger Barnett

#### Introduction

The purpose of this research is to analyze whether or not it is possible to produce a feasible concept for waging an asymmetric campaign. The literature review is geared to that end. As such, this literature review contains three parts. The first addresses contemporary theories and viewpoints on asymmetry. The second examines why asymmetry appears to be new and different. The final part examines the environment in which asymmetry can thrive. The object of this review is to make it possible to identify the key concepts upon which asymmetry is based.

#### Contemporary Theories and Viewpoints on Asymmetry

The term “asymmetrical warfare” appeared in the early nineties of the previous century. In his 1991 dissertation, Paul Thazhakuzhhyil examines the question “Why do weaker powers in an asymmetric conflict situation engage in wars against their stronger opponents?”<sup>2</sup> In the following years, the term became increasingly popular and appeared in ever more publications. However, there remains considerable debate on some aspects of asymmetry. First, no two definitions are exactly the same. Second, many argue that it is not particularly new or different. For some, “asymmetry” is just another word for “different.” Hence, every war can be called asymmetric.<sup>3</sup> For others, the term asymmetry

only applies if the ends and the ways, as well as the means of the opponents are totally different. Considering the subject and scope of this thesis, none of these debates really matters. The characteristics of asymmetry that do matter for this thesis are widely agreed upon. These characteristics are: the change in mind-set of potential enemies caused by Desert Storm, the attempt of the asymmetric opponent to offset the superior strength of the OPC, the forms of asymmetry, the constraints on the use of force by the OPC, and the disconnect between the huge global responsibilities that the leadership of the OPC defines for itself and the responsibilities that the OPC population is willing to accept.

Various publications consider the Gulf War and Operation Desert Storm as events that triggered an important change in the mind-set of potential enemies. In its 1997 report, the National Defense Panel was very explicit in this respect:

We can assume that our enemies and future adversaries have learned from the Gulf War. They are unlikely to confront us conventionally. . . . Instead, they may find new ways to attack our interests, our forces and our citizens. They will look for ways to match their strengths against our weaknesses.<sup>4</sup>

Operation Desert Storm demonstrated the superior military strength of the USA. Previously, potential enemies could harbor the illusion that their traditional armies composed of tanks, armored personnel carriers and self-propelled artillery pieces might inflict prohibitive losses on an attacking US armed force. After Desert Storm it was plain for everyone that this was not the case. In this respect, Operation Desert Storm marks a turning point in the mind-set of many potential adversaries: something other than traditional warfare and traditional hardware were needed to confront the USA or another OPC. This understanding forms the base for the central idea in publications on asymmetry: future opponents will try to offset the superior strength of the OPC by using



asymmetrical methods because opposing the OPC with traditional military methods equals suicide.

Many authors agree on the forms of asymmetry. In an article for the *Military Review*, Steven Metz identifies six: methods, technology, interests, organization, time, and will.<sup>5</sup> Of these six, asymmetry of methods is the most visible and hence the best known form of asymmetry. Traditional warfare does not normally include and does not normally condone methods like terrorism and guerrilla.

Technological asymmetries are usually perceived as the OPC possessing modern, sophisticated, and expensive weaponry while the asymmetric opponent does not. However, this perception is misleading because many advanced electronic gadgets are now within reach of everyone. These gadgets can be used in innovative and surprising ways. Therefore, it is more correct to say that, on the one hand the OPC's armed forces use modern, sophisticated and expensive weaponry resulting from institutionalized innovation; while, on the other hand the asymmetric opponent uses everything that is available to him, including modern, commercially available technology, in an improvised and sometimes innovative way.

Organizational asymmetry stems from the necessity to survive. In order to survive, the asymmetric opponent has to remain out of reach of the OPC. Therefore, his organization is not based on large, uniformed, and hierarchal formations. Instead, his organization will be totally different in order to be elusive and resilient.

The remaining asymmetries of time, interests and will are related to one another. The interests of the OPC in a conflict with a weak opponent will likely be less vital than those of the opponent. As a consequence, the leadership and the population of the OPC

are probably less patient than the asymmetric opponent about the outcome of the conflict and less willing to pursue it as the cost goes up.

Several publications emphasize the central role of constraints in asymmetry. The notion of constraint on the use of force is key in asymmetrical warfare. In what is known as the Melian Dialogue, the Greek historian Thucydides recorded the Athenian envoys' answer to the request of the Melians to remain neutral in the fifth-century B.C. war between Athens and Sparta: "The strong do what they wish and the weak suffer what they must."<sup>6</sup> This has long been the theoretical basis of political realism in international relations. Constraints, however, prevent the strong from doing what they please, thus invalidating or at least vitiating Thucydides' premise. The importance of this notion to asymmetry is underlined by the fact that Kenneth Mc Kenzie chose the expression "The Revenge of the Melians" as the title of his study on asymmetric threats.<sup>7</sup> According to another author, Roger Barnett, "Constraints are the taproots of Asymmetrical Warfare."<sup>8</sup> In his book, he identifies operational, organizational, legal, and moral constraints. However, no constraint can be viewed independently from another: "No single constraint can be isolated as the cause of the problem: the cumulative weight of all of them is what has become oppressive."<sup>9</sup> The question remains why an OPC accepts constraints in the first place. Why is it that the USA cannot do as it pleases? Roger Barnett provides an answer by stating that: "A free, independent, burgeoning news media and the instantaneous transmission of information on a global basis . . . have a depressant effect on options to use force. The contemporary media tend to . . . reduce the time available for decision making, and bring the general public into all debates about the use of force."<sup>10</sup> However, this answer is insufficient. It generates the next question. Why does the

leadership of an OPC allow the media to shorten its available time to make decisions, and why does the OPC accept that the general public participates in the debate on national security? As Roger Barnett puts it, “The United States takes the constraints, much as it takes college students, too seriously.”<sup>11</sup> Yet, this quote suggests that the leadership of the USA has the choice to take these constraints seriously or not. This thesis argues in the subsequent paragraphs that the leadership has no choice. The leadership of an OPC has to accept constraints on the use of force during an asymmetric campaign. Conversely, these constraints create opportunities for the asymmetric opponent to exist, move, act, and communicate, despite the overwhelming power of the OPC. A curious consequence of constraints is the tendency of asymmetric actors to spawn a dual military and civilian leadership. The military leadership covertly organizes violent actions, while the civilian leadership openly provides essential services to the population in which the asymmetric actor is rooted. The asymmetric opponent’s civilian leaders can afford to act openly because constraints prevent the OPC from harming them. Thomas Hammes mentions this type of double organization in his study of the First Intifada.<sup>12</sup>

A last important concept in asymmetry is the gap between the huge global responsibilities that the leadership of the OPC identifies for itself and the responsibilities that the OPC population is willing to accept. This topic usually remains implicit rather than explicit in publications on asymmetrical warfare. Responsibilities, as defined by the leadership of the OPC, determine the OPC’s level of involvement in conflicts. As a consequence, an OPC sometimes accepts a greater burden in a conflict than is justified on the grounds of its stake in the outcome of that conflict. This development in turn creates tensions between the leadership of the OPC and its constituency. The population’s refusal

to accept the responsibilities that the politicians identify for their country is not new. It is referred to in phrases like: “Mourir pour Dantzig,” “white man’s burden,” and “entangling alliances.” These negative connotations create opportunities for the asymmetric opponent to erode the OPC’s resolve to continue a conflict.

In summary, Desert Storm created a motivation to use asymmetry as a means to challenge an OPC and to look for methods that offset its superior strength. The constraints provide opportunities for the asymmetric opponent to exist, move, act, and communicate, despite the OPC’s overwhelming power. Finally, the gap between the OPC’s leadership and its constituency over the OPC’s global responsibilities provides an opportunity for the weak opponent to erode OPC resolve for continuing the conflict.

### Something New and Different?

All of the above is necessary, but insufficient to consider asymmetry new or different. With a bit of imagination it is possible to find examples of asymmetry, as described above, throughout military history. In a similar way, it is possible to say that the steam engine was invented by Hero of Alexandria in 150 B.C. Hero actually constructed the first steam turbine and he developed the principles for the steam engine and various other machines. However, it was only after a wave of technological, sociological, and other changes, generally referred to as the industrial revolution, that steam operated machines became a significant part of daily life. By analogy, asymmetry in itself is not something new and different, but the environment in which it can thrive is. Facing an OPC and surviving it boils down to avoiding detection and engagement by this OPC, while carrying out significant actions. A wave of recent technological and

sociological changes, generally referred to as globalization, offers new opportunities to do so.

“Globalization” is a buzzword that has made the producers of ink and paper even happier than “asymmetry.” Reference to globalization produces an even greater need to narrow things down to what is essential for research purposes. Globalization hinges on two capabilities. The first is the ability to communicate without hindrance from distance, bandwidth, cost, or censorship. The second is the ability to reach any major city in the world within a day at an affordable cost. These factors have numerous consequences, but only several pertain to this thesis.

A first important consequence of globalization is the changed nature of immigration. Until a couple of decades ago, an immigrant who left his country made a leap of faith, a step into the dark with little possibility to look or turn back. Integration in the destination country was the most viable option, and every successive generation was better integrated than the previous. This understanding is no longer the case. As a result of the possibility to communicate without hindrance from distance, bandwidth, cost, or censorship, an immigrant can retain his culture. He can watch his favorite homeland television show on satellite television. He can keep in touch with relatives to negotiate the marriage of his children. As a result of the possibility to reach any major city in the world within a day at an affordable cost, an immigrant can return to his homeland during the holidays to display his wealth and success. While he is there, he can give his daughter in marriage and return with his son in law. First generation immigrants can now build hometown communities around their new domiciles. There are perhaps fewer second and

third generation immigrants and more one-and-one-half generation immigrants. These latter are the children of second and first generation immigrants.

The revolution in communication even allows second and third generation immigrants to rediscover their cultural identity. Integration has become a partially if not wholly reversible process. Consequently, locally concentrated pockets of the most diverse foreign cultures appear in every major city. Every village can now choose to be global. History only knows one example of a people that managed over long periods to retain its culture after immigration: the Jews. Because of this, there is already a word to describe this phenomenon: Diaspora. According to Samuel Huntington, the proliferation of diasporas is a new and important development in international politics. He defines a diaspora as: “transnational ethnic or cultural communities whose members identify with a homeland that may or may not have a state.”<sup>13</sup> He asserts that the emergence of multiple diasporas is

the result of two developments. First, the large migrations from poor to rich countries. . . . Second, economic globalization and the improvements in global communications and transportations [that] make it possible for diasporas to remain in close contact economically, socially, and politically with their homeland.<sup>14</sup>

A second important consequence of globalization is the changed nature of democracy. The ability to communicate without hindrance from distance, bandwidth, cost, or censorship, and the ability to travel easily have surprising consequences for democratic governance and its relationship with the media. According to Alvin and Heidi Toffler, “these new media tend to dissipate power” because they allow the public “to talk back to the central authorities.”<sup>15</sup> To better understand this fact, it is useful to bear in mind that many legal characteristics of democracies stem from the shortcomings in

eighteenth- and nineteenth-century types of communication and travel. Thus in theory, it is easy to hold as self-evident the truths that every man is created equal and that governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed.<sup>16</sup> However, the practical implementation of these self-evident truths is a totally different matter, before telecommunications and while people travel at a “speed” of three miles per hour. Democratic societies are founded on the principle that the chosen few represent and govern the many. Beyond theory, representative government evolved for the simple practical reason that it was technically impossible two and a half centuries ago to involve all citizens in the political decision making process. The process of deriving powers from the consent of the governed took the form of government-organized elections every so many years. Those elected had a mandate and could speak for the electorate and make decisions on their behalf. This is no longer necessarily true. Statistics, polls, the Internet, interactive television programs, and twenty-four-hour news channels make it possible to organize a nationwide debate on any political issue and to push decisions about it. The general public can now participate directly in the political debate instead of indirectly via chosen representatives and leaders. The word “mandate” has lost much of its original substance. According to Dick Morris, “every day is election day” and politicians have a “need for a daily majority.”<sup>17</sup> As a result, the leadership of a democratic OPC, like the USA, is under constant scrutiny from its electorate. Much like some countries retain a ceremonial monarch as a relic of an obsolete political system, more and more developed countries now have something like a ceremonial representative democracy. The real debate, the real compromising, and the real voting often takes place outside parliament in the media. What happens in the parliament is often nothing more than a choreographed

ritual that ratifies what has been decided elsewhere. These rituals are not unlike those that surround ceremonial monarchies. Three basic laws govern the functioning of such media-dominated democracies. First, active and well-organized minorities have a disproportionate influence on the political decision making process. Second, the news value of an issue is decisive for its political importance. And third, the leadership is under constant scrutiny by the people.

### The Environment in Which Asymmetry Can Thrive

What are the implications of all the talk about globalization for the subject of this thesis? The changed nature of immigration means that “in controversies involving the homeland country or homeland groups in conflict with other states or groups over the control of territory, diasporas have often, but not always, supported the more extremist of their homeland colleagues.”<sup>18</sup> Consequently, Mao’s fish can now find a comfortable pond or even a lake in every important city in the Western world. No matter what nationality or race you belong to, what the color of your skin is, what language you speak, or how peculiar your accent, it is now possible to exist, move, communicate, recruit, raise funds, and act almost everywhere in the Western world without a priori being singled out as odd, suspicious, or dangerous. Asymmetric actors now have the advantage that “establishing and moving cells in virtually any country is relatively easy in a world where more than 140 million people live outside of their country of origin.”<sup>19</sup> This is an advantage that is unique in modern history.

Understanding the importance of the changed nature of democracy to asymmetric conflicts is more complex. As stated above, the revolution in communications has made it impossible to prevent the general public from interfering directly and permanently in the



political decision making process. Consequently, there is a constant dynamic interaction among the media, the public, the leadership, and the opposition on politically important issues. An asymmetric conflict almost invariably has high news value and as such the conflict is a politically important issue. Jon Western states that “in nearly every instance when a president has considered using American force in overseas combat missions, intense political debates have ensued . . . and extensive efforts have been designed to mobilize public and political support.”<sup>20</sup> Another fact one has to bear in mind is that “the basic tenet of the exercise of political power [says that]: *in any situation, whatever the cause, there will be an active minority for the cause, a neutral majority, and an active minority against the cause.*”<sup>21</sup>

At the start of a conflict, the active minority against the conflict (the contras) do not have a stepping stone to air their objections. The neutral majority (the fence-sitters) support their government by default out of nationalistic loyalty. The active minority for the conflict (the pros) have what they want. As the conflict goes ahead, interactions develop among the media, the public, the leadership and the opposition. Let us consider two different cases. First, the leadership of the OPC violates some constraints, for example, with regard to excessive collateral damage or maltreatment of prisoners. Second, the duration of the war is longer than expected and the cost is higher than expected.

Recent examples show that violations of constraints by an OPC have a high news value. Incidents can spark endless discussions about ethical principles. The typical reaction of the contemporary media is to organize talk shows and polls on the issue, usually in the form of yes-or-no questions. Dichotomies create polarization, which

reduces the number of fence-sitters. The fence-sitters typically join the pros as well as the contras. However, the contras are the only ones to benefit, because they go from nothing to something, the pros go from a lot to a bit more. This development gives the contras an opportunity to get organized and to gain momentum for growth. As soon as they represent a noticeable fraction of the electorate, the opposition might be tempted to court them. The opposition can do this not by adopting the contras' opinions, but merely by taking a slightly less belligerent position than the leadership.

A similar process occurs if a conflict drags on and the costs go up. Whatever the declarations of the leadership at the start of the conflict, the public has certain expectations about its duration and cost. As soon as expected duration and/or cost are exceeded, the contras can use the development as a stepping stone to denounce the war. The media will ask the leadership questions on the subject. The leadership's answers will generate new expectations that will once again be compared with reality.

One difference inherent in the violation of constraints is that protracted war does not polarize the public. It gradually changes the mood of the fence-sitters from default nationalistic support to concern. The opposition can capitalize by voicing this concern, by demanding a clear plan for the conduct of the conflict, and by asking whether the leadership has not exaggerated its responsibilities in the world. The opposition's agenda here is to generate even more expectations that can be frustrated by the realities in the field and to take advantage of the public's reluctance to accept the huge global responsibilities that the OPC's leadership has identified for itself. The fact that the interactions among the leadership, the opposition, and the media lead to public expectations that cannot be met, is described by Jon Western. He holds that "because

rhetorical campaigns are such an integral part of mobilizing public and political support, there is a tendency to oversell the message. The constant temptation to manipulate and distort information, frequently leads the public to develop unrealistic expectations about the nature or likely cost or efficacy of military intervention.”<sup>22</sup>

Another difference inherent in the violation of constraints is that protraction has to be sustained by actions of the asymmetric opponent. For the media-fed frenzy over constraints and protraction to continue, the asymmetric opponent has to create facts that highlight the gap between expectations and reality. To do this, the asymmetric opponent always has to retain the ability to strike next. However, the political effect of the strikes can be multiplied by the careful focus and timing of these strikes.

The above-mentioned cases support the contention that the art of political opposition in a nation at war consists of adopting a position as close as possible to that of the leadership, but which nevertheless lies between the leadership and those opposed to the conflict. As the conflict goes on, more and more fence-sitters will move towards the less belligerent of the two parties, which is the party or major faction in opposition. The tendency of the leadership will be to reposition itself in order to regain public support. A clever opposition will react to this by readjusting its opinions in order to remain the less hawkish of the two parties. This jockeying creates a political shift towards an exit-strategy. Thomas Hammes’ case study of the First Intifada provides insight into the mechanism that creates this shift towards an exit-strategy. The Intifada generated this kind of political interactions described above among “liberal and secular elements of the Israeli society”<sup>23</sup> (the contras), Likud (the leadership), and Labor (the opposition). In the

end, “the result was the election of a Labor government, which then agreed to and conducted the Oslo negotiations.”<sup>24</sup>

A discussion of constraints shows that the OPC’s leadership can be its own worst enemy if it does not respect certain constraints on the use of violence. The media will not hesitate to exploit an issue of such high news value, the public will be polarized on the issue, and the contras as well as a clever political opposition will capitalize on the resulting polarization, thus eroding the leadership’s very powerbase. The modern revolution in communications has made interactions unavoidable among the leadership, the media, the public, and the opposition. To paraphrase Barnett, the OPC has no choice but to take constraints and college students seriously. The OPC’s necessary “daily majority”<sup>25</sup> depends on taking them seriously.

It is important to identify the variables of the political process key to the shift towards the exit-strategy. These variables include the extent of polarization over non-adherence to constraints; the ability of the opposition to maneuver in order to permanently be slightly less belligerent than the leadership; the ability of the contras to gain and retain momentum; the ability of the asymmetric opponent to create disconnects between expectation and reality; the ability of the OPC leadership to defuse crises over non-adherence to constraints; and the ability of the same leadership to avoid creating expectations that cannot be met. This political process assumes an atmosphere of constant electoral pressure in which all political decisions have to yield electoral results. In other words, the results of the next elections or of the next opinion polls are more important than the outcome of the asymmetric conflict itself. The validity of this assumption is

probably inversely proportionate to the importance of the OPC interests at stake in the conflict and to the statesman-like qualities of the politicians involved.

For the purpose of this thesis, a final important consequence of the changed nature of democracy for asymmetric conflicts is the possibility for diasporas to transform themselves into active and well-organized minorities. The implication of this transformation is that an asymmetric opponent is not limited to the use of violence in his struggle against an OPC. He can add direct political pressures and actions to his arsenal of tools. Huntington observes that in the USA, “the highly competitive two-party system gives strategically placed minorities such as diasporas the opportunity to affect elections in the single-member districts of the House of Representatives and at times also in statewide Senate elections.”<sup>26</sup>

#### The study of asymmetry, asymmetric actors and asymmetric campaigning

Crucial to this thesis is the assumption that rationality is relevant to a study of asymmetric campaigning and that asymmetric actors actually do produce campaign plans. Many authors accept this proposition as “a given”. T.E. Lawrence, for example, states that “irregular war [is] far more intellectual than a bayonet charge.”<sup>27</sup> Galula calls an insurgency “a *protracted struggle* conducted methodically, step by step in order to attain specific intermediate objectives leading finally to the overthrow of the existing order.”<sup>28</sup> The National Strategy for Combating Terrorism also assumes the existence of a rational enemy with a clear plan. This strategy holds that “we face an adaptive enemy” and that “terrorists seek to dictate the timing of their actions while avoiding our strengths and exploiting our vulnerabilities.”<sup>29</sup> Some leaders of organizations that fought asymmetrically have even published their strategies and campaign plans. Mao explained

his views on guerilla warfare in a handbook. Che Guevara wrote about his Foco Strategy, while T. E. Lawrence has already been mentioned earlier.

If it is safe to assume that rationality is relevant to a study of asymmetry and that asymmetric actors do make plans for their campaigns, then the problem becomes one of selecting an appropriate method to study the process. One possible solution is to use Lawrence's, Mao's or Guevara's publications.<sup>30</sup> These publications begin with a particular experience and derive general rules and lessons about asymmetry from that experience. Another solution is to use a general theory of warfare and to derive particular campaign planning methods for asymmetric conflicts from this theory. Because asymmetrical conflict is essentially political, it is necessary to use a theory that emphasizes the primacy of politics in warfare. Carl von Clausewitz's On War is well suited for this purpose. However, this work constitutes a theory, not a campaign planning method. Therefore, Clausewitz retains only general, or overarching, significance. What is needed is a method based on Clausewitz's theory and designed to delineate the methods of modern campaign planning. Such methods have been developed by Dr. Strange and Colonel Iron<sup>31</sup> and by Dr. Kem,<sup>32</sup> and the application of these methods are discussed in Chapter 3 below.

### Conclusion

On the basis of this literature review, it is possible to identify some concepts that are key to an understanding of asymmetry. The central focus is an attempt by a weak opponent to mitigate his weaknesses by exploiting the constraints and the responsibilities of the OPC. Recent technological, sociological, and other developments, known by the umbrella term globalization, have created a new environment in which mitigation and

exploitation can thrive. Inter alia, the changing the nature of democracy and immigration owes much to globalization.

At the same time, cheap communications, and air travel have made the process of integration of immigrants avoidable and reversible. Consequently, pockets of various cultures, diasporas, exist in every major city of the Western world, thus creating an environment in which anyone can move, act, and communicate nearly everywhere in the world without being a priori considered a stranger or a threat. As well-organized minorities, diasporas can also interfere directly in the political processes of the OPC.

Developments in communications and media have changed the nature of democracy by making it impossible to exclude direct and permanent involvement of the general public in the political decision making process. This involvement provides opportunities for the asymmetric opponent to create and maintain dynamic interactions among the media, the public, the leadership, and the OPC opposition that can lead towards an exit-strategy. Six variables influence this process, and only one can be controlled by the asymmetric opponent. However, no one really controls the other five. In the aggregate, key aspects of globalization determine the environment in which asymmetric conflicts take place.

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<sup>1</sup>Roger W. Barnett, *Asymmetrical Warfare, Today's Challenge to U.S. Military Power* (Dulles, VA: Brassey's, 2003), 15.

<sup>2</sup>Paul V. Thazhakuzhyil, *Asymmetric Conflicts: A Study of War Initiation by Lesser Powers* (Los Angeles, CA: University of California, 1991), x.

<sup>3</sup>Stephen J. Blank, "Rethinking Asymmetric Threats," Strategic Studies Institute, 2003 [article on-line]; available from <http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pubs/display.cfm?PubId=103>; Internet; accessed 12 November 2005.

<sup>4</sup>National Defense Panel, *Transforming Defense: National Security in the 21st Century* (Washington, DC: December 1997), 11.

<sup>5</sup>Steven Metz, *Strategic Asymmetry*, *Military Review* 81 (April 2001): 27.

<sup>6</sup>Thucydides, *The Landmark Thucydides: A Comprehensive Guide to the Peloponnesian War*, ed. Robert B. Strassler, trans. Richard Crawley (New York, NY: Free Press, 1996), 352.

<sup>7</sup>Kenneth F. McKenzie Jr., *The Revenge of the Melians: Asymmetric Threat and the Next QDR*, Mc Nair Paper 62 (Washington, DC: INSS, 2000), title page.

<sup>8</sup>Barnett, 15.

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid.*, 153.

<sup>10</sup>*Ibid.*, 52.

<sup>11</sup>*Ibid.*, 155.

<sup>12</sup>Thomas X. Hammes, *The Sling and the Stone: On war in the 21st Century* (St. Paul, MN: Zenith Press, 2004), 95.

<sup>13</sup>Samuel P. Huntington, *Who Are We? The Challenges to America's National Identity* (New York, NY: Simon and Schuster, 2004), 276.

<sup>14</sup>*Ibid.*, 277.

<sup>15</sup>Alvin Toffler and Heidi Toffler, *War and Anti-War. Survival at the Dawn of the 21st Century* (New York, NY: Little, Brown and Company, 1993), 169.

<sup>16</sup>The Declaration of Independence of the Thirteen Colonies.

<sup>17</sup>Dick Morris, *The New Prince: Machiavelli Updated for the Twenty-First Century* (New York, NY: St Martin's Press, 1999), 74.

<sup>18</sup>Huntington, 285.

<sup>19</sup>National Security Council, *National Strategy for Combating Terrorism*, White House Publication, 2003 [article on-line]; available from [http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/02/counter\\_terrorism/counter\\_terrorism\\_strategy.pdf](http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/02/counter_terrorism/counter_terrorism_strategy.pdf), 8 (hereafter cited as *National Strategy for Combating Terrorism*).

<sup>20</sup>Jon Western, *Selling Intervention and War: The Presidency, the Media, and the American Public* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005), 4

<sup>21</sup>Galula, 75.



- <sup>22</sup>Western, 232.
- <sup>23</sup>Hammes, 108.
- <sup>24</sup>Ibid., 109.
- <sup>25</sup>Morris, 74.
- <sup>26</sup>Huntington, 286.
- <sup>27</sup>T. E. Lawrence, *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* (Privately printed: 1926. Reprint, New York: 1962), 348.
- <sup>28</sup>David Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice* (St. Petersburg, FL: Hailer Publishing, 2005), 4.
- <sup>29</sup>*National Strategy for Combating Terrorism*, 24.
- <sup>30</sup>These publications are “Yu Chi Chan” by Mao Tse Tung, “Seven Pillars of Wisdom” from T. E. Lawrence and “La Guerra de Guerillas” by Che Guevara.
- <sup>31</sup>Dr. Joe Strange and Colonel Richard Iron, *Understanding Centers of Gravity and Critical Vulnerabilities* (Maxwell AFB, Alabama: Air War College, 2003) [database on-line]; available from <http://www.au.af.mil.au/awc/awcgate/usmc/cog2.pdf>; Internet; accessed 3 November 2005.
- <sup>32</sup>Dr. Jack D. Kem, *Campaign Planning: Tools of the Trade* (Ft. Leavenworth, KS: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 2005).

## CHAPTER 3

### THE RESEARCH METHOD

The ultimate goal of military research is to be prepared for the next conflict before it actually starts. Adapting to new threats is a key aspect of preparation. However, these new threats must be understood. The researcher must recognize, analyze, and describe them. As noted in chapter 2, asymmetry traces a long and storied existence, but one often associated with faraway and strange places and conditions like dense jungles and impassable mountains. Recently, however, asymmetry has assumed a more challenging character, and what might be understood as asymmetry has spread to new environments. It has arguably become the rule rather than the exception.

The purpose of this thesis is to analyze the nature of an asymmetrical conflict between a weak actor and an overwhelmingly stronger opponent. Is such a conflict a dead-end struggle of mindless fanatics doomed to fail? Or is it a viable option based on a rational plan that actually promises success? Answers to these questions depend on the capacity of the asymmetric actor to produce a feasible campaign plan and to execute it. The higher the probability of success and the more rational the asymmetric choice, the greater becomes the likelihood that actors will choose this form of fighting an OPC. Therefore, the primary research question of this thesis is: Is it possible to produce an asymmetric campaign concept sufficiently feasible to constitute a rational course of action against an overwhelmingly stronger opponent?

As a reminder from Chapter 1, several secondary questions flow naturally from the primary. What is the ultimate goal of a campaign against an overwhelmingly stronger opponent? In other words, what is victory and what is defeat in this kind of conflict?

Another problem is the choice and adaptation of methods both to the environment and to the overwhelming strength of the asymmetric actor's opponent. This problem leads to three more questions. First, what is asymmetry? Second, what are its key concepts? And third, in what kind of environment can asymmetry enjoy success, especially in view of recent technological and sociological changes that make the environment suitable for asymmetric methods?

Again, as a reminder, for research purposes, the above questions are grouped into six secondary questions. First, what is asymmetrical campaigning and what are its key concepts? Second, why does it appear to be new and different? Third, what are the characteristics of the environment in which it can thrive? Fourth, what do victory and defeat really mean in an asymmetric context? Fifth, how can an asymmetric opponent realize the conditions that will impose his will upon the OPC in an asymmetric campaign? Finally, how can the feasibility of an asymmetric campaign plan be assessed? The purpose of the research method is to provide framework and focus for the analysis of research materials in order to answer the primary and secondary research questions. To this end, the research method consists of four steps.

In a first step, a literature review provided materials for the analysis to determine the more salient contemporary views on asymmetric warfare. This survey made it possible to define asymmetric campaigning and to explain why it appears to be something new and different. By describing the environment in which asymmetry can thrive, this review also identified the aspects of globalization that impact on the asymmetric opponent's ability to wage an asymmetric campaign. Finally, this review

determined the extent of a contemporary OPC's global liability and inherent OPC constraints on the use of armed force.

The second step recent events provided supporting data to answer the other secondary questions. These answers, in turn, provided the necessary elements to produce an asymmetric campaign concept. First came the necessity to clearly define what victory and defeat really mean in an asymmetric conflict. Second came the requirement to determine how the asymmetric opponent must realize the conditions that enable him to impose his will upon the OPC. This requirement is the crux of the asymmetric campaign planning problem. Several possibilities suggest themselves as responses to this requirement.

One possible solution borrows from the methods publicized by successful leaders who fought asymmetrically. Examples are T.E. Lawrence, Mao Tse Tung, and Che Guevara. As mentioned in Chapter 2, their publications start from a particular experience to derive general rules and lessons about the conduct of asymmetric conflict. However, this approach remains unsatisfactory for three reasons. First, Mao's and Guevara's theories suffer from inadequacies inherent in a Marxist-Leninist outlook. Second, the methods of these leaders lack the capacity for universal application. It is very likely that these methods were suitable only for the particular places and times in which they were employed. The fact that Che Guevara died when attempting to introduce his way of fighting to Bolivia dramatically illustrates this point. Third, and more significantly, one of the conclusions from the literature review held that the environment in which asymmetry can thrive is now radically new and different.

Therefore, it is likely that the particular experiences of these authors are no longer applicable to the current situation. Methods based on experience are appropriate and applicable when a given situation is similar to the situation in which a given method was developed. When the situation or the environment have changed in some major way, it is better to use methods based on more abstract theory.

Thus, an alternative solution is to refer to a general and more abstract theory on warfare to derive particular campaign planning methods for contemporary and future asymmetric conflicts. Because asymmetrical conflict is essentially political, theory must emphasize the primacy of politics in warfare. Carl von Clausewitz's On War is well suited for this purpose, but his work is only a point of departure. Also, Clausewitz's work is more theory and absolutely less a modern campaign planning method. Therefore, Clausewitz is relevant only in a general sense. What is needed is a method based on Clausewitz's work and designed to analyze the parties to a conflict and their campaign plans. Furthermore, because this thesis views the campaign planning problem from the perspective of the asymmetric actor, the method must be sufficiently intuitive and robust so that it can be applied by something less than a general staff officer. That is, the method must be concise, simple, and intellectually accessible. Such method has been developed by Dr. Strange and Colonel Iron <sup>1</sup> and by Dr. Kem.<sup>2</sup>

These methods describe ways to identify enemy and friendly centers of gravity. These centers must be analyzed in order to determine their critical capabilities, requirements, and vulnerabilities. The campaign concepts derived from this analysis hinge on "taking out the enemy centers of gravity" and on "care and feeding of the friendly centers of gravity."<sup>3</sup> Taking out an enemy's center of gravity can be done by

making it irrelevant, stripping it of the support and the requirements it needs, or by defeating it through exploitation of systematic weaknesses and vulnerabilities. This thesis applies these methods from the asymmetric opponent's perspective. In this way, it is possible to identify the asymmetric opponent's campaign planning problem and to develop a solution in terms of conceptual linkage among ends, ways, and means, and lines of operations.

The methodology involves assessment of the campaign concept's feasibility. This step is accomplished by analyzing which characteristics of the OPC and of the asymmetric actor constitute prerequisites for success in asymmetric campaigning and by determining what type of actions increase or decrease the chances for each side's success. Events from recent history provide examples and precedents to assess the feasibility of certain elements within the campaign concept, i.e., whether or not they are already being carried out successfully. These recent events do not necessarily correspond fully with the larger OPC-asymmetric actor model, since the model is still emerging. However, there are examples, e.g., Israel and the Palestinian Authority, in which the contending sides resemble an OPC and an asymmetric actor. This thesis accepts the understanding that such analogies, while useful and illustrative, retain their limitations.

The final step in the research method applies the analysis from the first three steps to answering the research question. Conclusions provide a recapitulation of the larger argument and offer suggestions for further inquiry.

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<sup>1</sup>Dr. Joe Strange and Colonel Richard Iron, *Understanding Centers of Gravity and Critical Vulnerabilities* (Maxwell AFB, Alabama: Air War College, 2003) [database online]; available from <http://www.au.af.mil.au/awc/awcgate/usmc/cog2.pdf>; Internet; accessed 3 November 2005

<sup>2</sup>Dr. Jack D. Kem, *Campaign Planning: Tools of the Trade* (Ft. Leavenworth, KS: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 2005).

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, 23.

## CHAPTER 4

### ANALYSIS

Victory means exit-strategy.<sup>1</sup>

Governor George W. Bush (R-TX)

#### Introduction

The literature review in chapter 2 has made it possible to determine the key concepts of asymmetry and to describe the environment in which it can thrive. However, whether or not it actually will thrive largely depends on the way that the planners and decision makers of the asymmetric opponent and the overwhelmingly powerful country (OPC) take these key concepts into account. This thesis examines the possibility of producing an asymmetric campaign concept sufficiently feasible to constitute a rational course of action against an OPC. To facilitate this examination, methods developed by Dr. Joe Strange, COL Richard Iron, and Dr. Jack D. Kem are employed to establish the perspective of the asymmetric opponent. These methods boil down to three steps: first, define the problem; second, develop a solution for the problem in terms of ends, ways, and means; and third, verify whether the solution answers the problem. These steps constitute the framework for this chapter.

#### Victory and Defeat in an Asymmetric Conflict

The first step in Dr. Kem's problem-solving methodology (and, indeed, in any such methodology) is to define the problem. The asymmetric opponent's problem is to impose his will on the OPC. But how can an asymmetric opponent realize the conditions that enable him to impose his will upon the OPC? By definition, an OPC is more



powerful than any other actor facing him. No asymmetric opponent can inflict sufficient physical losses to defeat an OPC. The result of an asymmetric conflict can almost never be destruction of the OPC. Under ordinary circumstances, the OPC will always have sufficient means to continue the conflict. The best the asymmetric opponent can hope to achieve is a political decision by the OPC to end conflict on terms that are favorable for the asymmetric opponent. Thus, from the latter's point of view, victory is to provoke and to shape an exit-strategy for the OPC. In other words, an asymmetric opponent imposes his will on the OPC by making the leadership of the OPC decide to quit.

If this is victory, then what is defeat? In pondering victory and defeat it is important to keep in mind that, whatever the reason for a war, after a while "war itself becomes the paramount issue."<sup>2</sup> If a conflict is decided by political decisions and exit-strategies rather than by events on the battlefield, then ending a conflict requires face-saving measures. The desire to make the OPC's leadership lose face can considerably complicate matters. Conversely, offering a face-saving alternative might be the shortest route to an exit-strategy and ultimate victory. Consequently, the sum of victory and defeat in an asymmetric conflict does not necessarily equal zero. On the contrary, avoiding or mitigating the OPC's outright defeat may contribute to the asymmetric opponent's victory.

The asymmetric actor's choice of defeat mechanism naturally flows from the definition of victory and defeat in an asymmetric context: it is to provoke and to shape the OPC's exit-strategy. Within political limits, the OPC's leadership has to decide to end the conflict on terms that are favorable for the asymmetric opponent.

### Center of Gravity Analysis of the OPC

The second step in Dr. Kem's method is to develop a solution for the problem in terms of ends, ways, and means. This solution results from a thorough analysis of both the OPC and the asymmetric opponent. This paragraph looks at the OPC. Within the context of an asymmetrical conflict, the first goal in analysis of the OPC is to determine its centers of gravity and their critical capabilities, critical requirements, and critical vulnerabilities. In order to make the next two paragraphs clearer, it is useful to include definitions for centers of gravity:

**Centers of Gravity (CG)** are physical or moral entities that are the primary components of physical or moral strength, power and resistance. **They don't just contribute to strength; they ARE the strength.** They offer resistance. They strike effective (or heavy) physical and moral blows. At the strategic level, they are usually leaders and populations determined to prevail. At operational and tactical levels they are almost invariably specific military forces.

**Critical Capabilities (CC):** every CG has some primary ability (or abilities) that makes it a CG in the context of a given scenario, situation or mission – including phases within campaigns or operations. Mostly simply stated: what can this CG do to you that puts great fear (or concern) into your heart in the context of your mission and level of war? Within a CC, the key word is the verb: it can *destroy* something, or *seize* an objective, or *prevent* you from achieving a mission.

**Critical Requirements (CR)** are conditions, resources and means that are essential for a CG to achieve its critical capability.

**Critical Vulnerabilities (CV)** are those CR, or components thereof, that are deficient, or vulnerable to neutralization or defeat in a way that will contribute to a center of gravity failing to achieve its CC.<sup>3</sup>

At the operational level of war and outside the OPC's territory the CG of the OPC clearly is its armed forces. The CCs of these armed forces include their abilities to detect all enemy formations above a very low detection threshold, to destroy these formations quickly and with great precision, and to project these two capacities anywhere in the world. The main CR of the armed forces is the continuous support they need from the

strategic level in order to remain committed. The strategic level must embody political will. A second CR is the need for targets. The armed forces cannot use their overwhelming power if their sensors cannot detect targets. A third CR is target legitimacy. If the detected targets comply with conditions that trigger constraints on the use of force, the armed forces cannot use their overwhelming power against these targets. The CVs include all factors that can undermine continuous political support for the commitment of armed forces. These factors can vary from prohibitive losses and cost, to violations of constraints on the use of force, to failure to prevent disconnects between public expectations and realities on the battlefield.

At the operational level and inside the OPC's territory, the CGs of the OPC are its internal security and judicial systems. The CCs of these systems are their ability to detect, arrest, and prosecute threats to national security. The main CRs of these systems are means, time, and intelligence. The forensic techniques employed by the security and judicial authorities to find threats require assets, time, and information. A second CR is the need for unequivocal evidence. Security forces and judicial authorities cannot use their powers to arrest and prosecute threats if a reasonable doubt exists over whether they are threats. A third CR is legitimacy for law enforcement. A strict procedural and legal framework governs the employment of legal enforcement authority. The CVs of the security forces and judicial authorities are all the factors that can undermine their freedom of action. These factors can vary from constitutional restraints, to bribing, threats, and outright harm to law enforcement agents and judicial functionaries, to simple lack of resources.

At the strategic level, the CG of the OPC, from the opponent's point of view, is the Political Decision-Making Machine (PDMM). The PDMM decides about the commitment of armed forces and establishes the legal framework for the employment of security forces and judicial authorities; although to an extent the latter are quasi-independent in democratic societies. The PDMM triggers the involvement of the OPC in the asymmetric conflict and decides the exit-strategy. Therefore, the PDMM is pivotal to victory and defeat within the context of asymmetric conflict.

The PDMM consists of at least four main elements that constantly interact: the media, the public, the leadership and the opposition. None of these four elements has sufficient powers to control the variables that determine the nature, direction, and outcome of permanent interactions among the main elements. In fact, this lack of overarching power is one of the essential characteristics of a free and democratic society. However, some basic rules roughly govern the behavior of each of the four components. First, the main concern of the leadership is not necessarily the asymmetric conflict, but the political momentum of legislation and the outcome of the next elections. This assertion becomes more valid if the OPC's interests at stake in the conflict are less than vital. Second, the political opposition's main concern is not necessarily the asymmetric conflict, but the reduction of the leadership's political freedom of movement and the outcome of the next elections. Third, the political behavior of the passive part of the public is primarily influenced by perceptions, gaps between expectations and perceived realities, and the ultimate reality of one's own wallet. Fourth, active, well organized minority groups in the public arena can always be counted on to hammer the same nail as

hard, as frequently, and as loudly as possible. Fifth, the media will permanently and actively stimulate interactions among all the components of the PDMM.

The critical capability of the PDMM is the ability to keep the armed forces, the security establishment, and the judicial authorities committed to the asymmetric conflict. The critical requirements for this are public support, in the form of Dick Morris' "daily majority," and a political opposition that refrains from exploiting the ongoing conflict for political gain. The critical vulnerabilities are all the factors that can undermine the "daily majority."<sup>4</sup> These are also all the factors that provide tempting opportunities for the opposition to exploit the conflict for political reasons.

#### Center of Gravity Analysis of the Asymmetric Actor

The center of gravity analysis for the asymmetric actor reflects the fact that the opponent of an overwhelmingly powerful country has no other option than a resort to asymmetric methods. In other words, the asymmetric opponent adapts his methods, his organization, and his objectives to the OPC.

At the strategic level, as explained above, the asymmetric actor aims at imposing his will on the OPC by provoking and shaping the OPC's exit-strategy. Thus, whatever the strategic CG of the asymmetric actor might be, it needs to display two critical capabilities. The first is the ability to provoke an exit-strategy by creating a political shift towards this exit-strategy. The second is the ability to shape the exit-strategy by providing an acceptable or face-saving alternative.

At the operational level, the asymmetric actor needs to exist, survive, and act. Globalization has complicated the issue of "an opponent's existence as an asymmetric actor." In the context of this thesis, the existence of an asymmetric actor can be defined

as “being a pervasive part of the life of a lot of people.” How important that part of life has to be in order to be pervasive is a matter for discussion. The people who coalesce around an asymmetric actor should at least consider their adherence to the cause a part of their identity, a common purpose, something for which they would risk their lives, or give an important part of their income. Before the revolution in communications and transportation technology, “being a pervasive part of the life of a lot of people” entailed control of a territory, the command over an organized armed force and/or some kind of infrastructure like education or propaganda for influencing the patterns in which neurons inside the people’s brains flash from left to right. For centuries, “being a pervasive part of the life of a lot of people” was attainable only for two kinds of organizations: states (or similar political entities) and religions. Besides, throughout history, a lot of time, resources and blood have been wasted over the question whether states and religions can simultaneously be pervasive parts of people’s lives simultaneously or whether they are mutually exclusive. These days are over. Globalization has made it possible for an organization to be a pervasive part of the life of a lot of people without controlling any territory or without being a religion.

These assertions do not mean that an asymmetric actor is not rooted in a territory or in a religion. On the contrary, many asymmetric actors find their strength in ethnic or religious foundations. However, the point here is that the asymmetric actor no longer needs to control either the territory or the ethnic population in which he is rooted, nor does he need to be an official part of the religion from which he derives his strength. In order to establish himself and to grow, an asymmetric actor has to confirm himself as the leading or representative entity of an ethnic or religious group and he has to convert

people to his cause. Therefore, the principal activities of an asymmetric actor with respect to his existence can be summarized in two verbs: confirm and convert.

The notion of the asymmetric actor's survival is linked to the critical capabilities of the OPC's CG. If these critical capabilities include the ability to detect very small enemy formations and to quickly destroy them with great precision all over the world, and if the application of these abilities is limited only by constraints, and sometimes overwhelming restraints, then the behavior of the asymmetric opponent has to be governed by three basic rules. First, what is not expendable has to remain undetectable. Second, what cannot remain undetectable needs to be expendable and has to act very fast. Third, what is not expendable and cannot remain undetectable has to comply with the conditions that trigger constraints on the use of force. The challenge for the asymmetric actor is to respect these three rules while creating the conditions to impose his will on the OPC. These three rules primarily have an impact on the actor's organization and on the type of actions he will carry out to attain his objective.

At the operational level, the asymmetric opponent needs to act. Simply existing and surviving leads nowhere. The asymmetric opponent's strategic aim is to provoke and to shape the OPC's exit-strategy. It is important to distinguish provoking actions from shaping actions, because the implications for the asymmetric actor are far-reaching.

In order to provoke an exit-strategy, the asymmetric opponent has to create a political shift towards an exit-strategy. As explained in Chapter 2, the momentum towards an exit-strategy can be driven by creating disconnects between expectations and realities, by forcing the OPC to violate constraints on the use of violence, and by increasing the cost and pain for the OPC in order to make the OPC's population reject the

responsibilities that the OPC's politicians have identified for their own country. For the purpose of this thesis, this type of activities of the asymmetric actor can be summarized in one verb: scare. These activities must be very visible and easily recognizable for all. They can take a variety of forms, but nowadays they consist mainly of guerilla operations, terrorist attacks, or even a generally hostile popular climate.

In order to shape the OPC's exit-strategy, the asymmetric actor has to be able to provide an alternative that is politically acceptable for the OPC's leadership. Shaping activity is almost invisible, is often not recognized, and is generally misunderstood. For the asymmetric actor, it is very difficult to accomplish. In essence, shaping an exit-strategy involves the capability to convince the OPC that there is an alternative, that the alternative is acceptable, and that accepting the alternative will lead to the end of the activities that are described in the previous paragraph and that are summarized by the verb "scare." The most visible and best known results of shaping activity are the assumption of power in South Africa by the African National Congress (ANC) and ongoing attempts to incorporate the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) and the Irish Republican Army (IRA) into the normal political process. For the purpose of this thesis, this shaping activity can be summarized by the verb "lure." This activity ties into the definition of victory and defeat. The central idea is that avoiding or mitigating the OPC's defeat contributes to the victory of the asymmetric actor. This mechanism, a kind of "golden bridge," eliminates the necessity for a large and spectacular, but costly conventional military offensive at the end of a conflict that results in images of a T-55 knocking down the fence of the OPC's embassy while refugees are evacuated from the roof top by helicopters. For most asymmetric opponents, some kind of acceptable



settlement is the only way to win a conflict against an OPC. These opponents simply lack the resources for a conventional final military offensive.

So far, the above analysis has led only to the identification of the asymmetric actor's critical capabilities. At the strategic level, these capabilities include the ability to provoke and to shape the OPC's exit-strategy. At the operational level, these capabilities are to confirm, to convert, to scare, and to lure. The following paragraphs elaborate further on the four operational-level critical capabilities.

### Confirm

As noted above, an asymmetric actor has to be a pervasive part of the life of a lot of people. The reason for this is twofold. First, the actor needs sufficient support to exist and to sustain an asymmetric campaign. Second, the actor needs some kind of constituency in order to be able to provide a credible and politically acceptable alternative. The way to become a pervasive part of the life of a lot of people is to unite them in a common political cause. The critical requirements for this are a target audience and the means to get to that target audience. Asymmetric actors do not emerge from a vacuum. They are mostly rooted in an ethnic, linguistic, or religious minority. The people that belong to that minority are the target audience. The goals of the activities summarized as "confirm" include the ability to speak for the target audience, to recruit from the target audience, and to represent the cause of the target audience.

Traditionally, the ways to reach the target audience were local, limited, and controllable: meetings, rallies, radio broadcasts, and distribution of tracts and pamphlets. Globalization, with satellite television, email, and the internet, greatly extended these possibilities. The revolution in communications technology has made it possible to reach

diverse audiences in easier, cheaper and more effective ways. Easier, because outreach can be accomplished without physically bringing the people together and address them. Cheaper, because the internet and email are virtually free. More effective, because, as any parent knows, colorful moving images on a screen are often much more persuasive than face-to-face cajolery. Globalization has also extended the geographical diversity of target audiences. Representatives of almost any ethnic, linguistic, or religious minority can now be found in most major cities in the world.

The critical vulnerability inherent in these activities is that they can be detected and, in principle, prevented. The traditional ways to reach target audiences were particularly vulnerable to measures such as censorship, curfew, jamming, restrictions on radio broadcasting, and restrictions on large gatherings. In order to address, influence, and educate (or brainwash) the target audience in an undisturbed manner, the actor traditionally needed to control his territory. Because of the overwhelming power of the OPC and the geographical dispersion of the target audience, it is now physically impossible to control the area in which that audience lives. However, physical control is no longer necessarily needed. Technically, the internet, email, and satellite television are just as vulnerable to state countermeasures as traditional means. Also, it is within the power of a government to restrict the freedom of members of certain minority groups within its territory. Yet, because of various constraints, it is often impossible for an OPC to treat members of a minority differently from its own citizens, or to deny them access to the internet, email, or satellite television. Thus, the critical vulnerability of the asymmetric actor is quite often vitiated by OPC constraints on the use of its own power.

Another critical vulnerability is competition from other organizations engaged in the same kind of confirming activities. Having multiple asymmetric actors representing the same minority in the same asymmetric conflict, like the PLO and Hamas in Palestine, is not conducive to success. It is also possible for the OPC to support the confirming activities of one or another organization in order to obtain the same result. The ability of the asymmetric opponent to counter this vulnerability largely depends on the quality of its leadership and the effectiveness of its organization.

The successful asymmetric actor must, therefore, wage a constant campaign to support its own legitimacy in the face of near-relentless competition. The end state of confirming activities is the perception that the asymmetric actor is the only representative of the ethnic, linguistic or religious minority in which it is rooted.

### Convert

The activities summarized as “convert” aim at winning non-native target audiences over to the cause of the asymmetric actor. The degree to which people are won over can vary. As a minimum, converting activities should transform some well-organized minorities inside the OPC into “useful idiots.” Lenin’s concept of “useful idiots” describes the phenomenon in which intellectual minorities who oppose their own leadership adopt the cause against which that leadership fights. There are virtually no critical requirements to achieve this result, other than that the opponent’s cause must have some kind of intellectual credibility. Hence there are no critical vulnerabilities. A good website should be sufficient.

As a maximum, converting activities can make it possible to recruit high value campaigners within the OPC’s territory. The critical requirements for this activity include

the ability to deliver the top of Maslow's pyramid (self-actualization),<sup>5</sup> direct contact with potential converts, and time. Because the process is usually costly and time-intensive, it may be limited to a very low number of people. The recruiting pool is formed by people that in the 1970s would probably have ended up in sects. The critical vulnerabilities are the risk of detection and the risk for infiltration, so an asymmetric actor must carefully evaluate the risks and benefits of this kind of converting activity.

The end state of converting activities is, at a minimum, a situation in which one or several well-organized minorities within the OPC have adopted some version of the asymmetric cause as a means to challenge the OPC leadership.

### Scare

The aim of the activities summarized as "scare" is to create political momentum towards an exit strategy. The most important characteristic of scaring actions is their perceived significance. An asymmetric actor is much smaller and much weaker than an OPC. Creating political momentum within the OPC's PDMM requires something more than a noisy crowd in the capital. The three basic ways to conduct significant actions are first, to increase cost and fear factors for the OPC population beyond an acceptable pain-to-gain ratio, second, to induce the OPC to violate constraints on the use of violence, and third, to foster disconnects between expectations and realities. The object is to make the OPC population reject the responsibilities that its politicians have identified for it.

The first way to conduct scaring activities, increasing cost and fear, is the best known asymmetric method. Fear is generated by creating the perception that anyone at any time and in any place can be the victim of an attack and that the OPC's leadership is incapable of providing protection against this threat. The cost factor comes from the

necessity for the government to organize a security system against the threat. Scare is not an objective in itself, the objective is political. Therefore, the secondary political effects of scaring activities have to be taken into account. One second order effect is the increased perception that the conflict is about vital interests. This effect can result from the choice of exaggeratedly violent methods, like weapons of mass destruction. Another secondary effect is sympathy for, instead of identification with, the victims. The first effect fails to generate fear and increases the victims' acceptable pain-to-gain ratio, while the second effectively generates fear and diminishes this ratio. In this respect, the Chechen choice to attack a Moscow theater on 23 October 2002 probably achieved identification. Everyone could imagine being one of the victims. Conversely, the Chechen attack on a school in Beslan in September 2004 can be considered counterproductive. Beslan is too remote to trigger identification, and children almost certainly arouse sympathy. The most important consequences of miscalculations about second order effects are an increased difficulty to lure, a higher tolerance for violations of constraints, a more permissive legal framework for the security forces and judicial authorities, and a decreased inclination for the opposition to capitalize on the conflict. In summary, mistakes about secondary effects can lead to the opposite of intended results.

The generation of fear and cost is not a linear process. More blood does not equal more fear and more cost. With regard to the choice of the target, close is better than remote, ordinary is better than special, and frequency is better than amplitude. The actions of the "Beltway sniper" who in three weeks during October 2002 shot ten totally ordinary people in the vicinity of gas stations and on supermarket parking lots in Washington DC probably generated more fear than many terrorist attacks that produced

more victims. Additionally, attacks do not have to be lethal. The power outage of 14 August 2003 in northeastern America, although not caused by an attack, clearly illustrates how easy it is for an attack to deprive several million people of electricity. The political impact of a non-lethal attack is not necessarily less than that of a lethal one. Moreover, it is probably much easier to recruit people to disrupt the power grid than it is to convince people to actually murder other people.

The critical requirements for scaring activities are personnel, weapons, and vulnerable significant targets. Acquiring weapons and finding vulnerable targets used to be critical vulnerabilities. Globalization has changed this situation dramatically. Weapons are now plentiful in many regions of the world. And if they are not, the internet provides the knowledge to produce them with commercially available and cheap products “to include industrial chemicals, liquefied natural gas or fertilizers.”<sup>6</sup> The choice of targets is even easier because “our technological apparatus has far outstripped our ability to secure it.”<sup>7</sup> Modern life is increasingly dependent on growing numbers of indefensible lines like electricity cables and petroleum pipelines that can be cut very easily. It is also noteworthy that globalization has given the asymmetric actor more choice with regard to the location of the attacks. Because people can be recruited from diasporas that can be found in any major city in the world, because weapons can be obtained or produced anywhere, and because money can be moved around electronically, the asymmetric actor now has few limitations on the choice and means for an attack.

The critical vulnerability nowadays is the survivability of personnel or campaigners who conduct the actual attacks. Outside the OPC’s territory, their problem is to remain under the detection threshold of the OPC’s armed forces while conducting

significant actions. To do this, the campaigners need to blend in with the local populace. That way, they are protected by constraints on the use of OPC force with regard to discrimination between combatants and non-combatants. Inside the OPC's territory, the attackers' problem is to avoid arrest and conviction and/or to frustrate criminal investigation while carrying out significant actions. This can be done by exploiting all the opportunities of the strict legal framework that rules the work of the security and judicial forces and/or by simply creating a work overload for these forces. However, even the most skillful asymmetric campaigners will remain vulnerable to OPC countermeasures. Opponents can be detected by the OPC while they are carrying out actions, or opponents can be tracked down by the OPC after their actions. Therefore, these campaigners have to be expendable and have to move fast.

There is a second way for asymmetric foes to conduct significant actions. That way is to force or induce the OPC to violate constraints on the use of violence. Such violations can be very effective in creating political momentum towards an exit strategy. Chapter 2 explored this issue in some detail. Non-adherence to constraints by the OPC creates political controversies in the media. Resulting polarization is beneficial to the asymmetric actor. Yet, this method requires the OPC to make a mistake. The asymmetric actor can only provoke the OPC. Whether or not the OPC actually makes a mistake is beyond control of the asymmetric opponent.

The third way for conducting significant actions, the creation of disconnects between expectations and realities, is a significant multiplier. This way largely depends on the timing of actions and on the expectations that the OPC's leadership creates in the minds of its people. If the OPC's leadership creates expectations that cannot be met (e.g.,

a conflict termination date or a decrease in the number of attacks or the number of victims), the asymmetric opponent can generate a disproportionate political effect by invalidating expectations at the right moment. Active minorities within the OPC, the media, and the political opposition will almost certainly capitalize on the disparity between expectations and realities. However, just as with violation of constraints, a focus on disconnects requires the OPC to present the opportunity to apply it.

It is useful to note in passing that scaring activities are relatively easy to organize. Many opportunities come from the increased vulnerability of the OPC's infrastructure, the increased freedom of movement of the asymmetric actor, and the increased availability of weapons. For many reasons, scaring activities are risky, but easy.

Scaring activities must lead to an end state with at least four characteristics. First, the media must present the asymmetric conflict as the predominant political issue; second, the majority of the population must perceive that the pain of the conflict is not worth the gain; third, the opposition must appear less belligerent than the leadership; and fourth, the leadership must be perceived as having neither the means nor the strategy to end the conflict before the next elections. A combination of all these factors creates a political shift towards an exit-strategy. However, this end state does not represent victory for the asymmetric opponent.

### Lure

The necessity for luring activities stems from the fact that it is impossible to win an asymmetric conflict with scaring activities alone. This observation is not new. Galula writes that, "guerilla warfare cannot win the decision against a resolute enemy. . . . The enemy must be met on his own ground; an insurgent regular army has to be created in



order to destroy the counterinsurgent forces.”<sup>8</sup> However, whereas Galula identifies the need for a large scale military offensive at the end of the insurgency in order to secure victory, the reality nowadays is that to attack an OPC with a regular force equals suicide. As soon as forces grow larger than the detection threshold, they can be liquidated. If the asymmetric foe cannot mount an offensive, stalemate is the most likely outcome to OPC-asymmetric opponent conflict. The OPC cannot stop sub-threshold activity, and the asymmetric opponent cannot transform sub-threshold activity into victory. The solution to stalemate is luring.

Luring is the process of shaping the exit-strategy by providing a politically acceptable alternative (a kind of “golden bridge”) for adoption by the OPC’s leadership. No matter how substantial the political momentum towards an exit-strategy, striking a deal with a terrorist enemy can still remain a political impossibility. Asymmetric opponents can resolve this dilemma by fielding two sets of leaders: one set organizes scaring activities, while the other provides the politically acceptable alternative for luring purposes.

The critical requirements for luring activities are multiple. First and foremost, there is the necessity for acceptability. The alternative for conflict termination needs to be acceptable to both the OPC and to the asymmetric actor itself. In order to be acceptable for the OPC, the alternative needs to avoid or mitigate the perception of defeat. This requirement almost invariably means a change in leadership for the asymmetric actor. As explained in the previous paragraph, the asymmetric opponent can solve this difficulty by having a field leadership that leads the campaign (LLC) and a separate, civilian leadership (CL) that distances itself scrupulously from any use of force in order not to

jeopardize its political acceptability. In order to be acceptable for the asymmetric actor, the alternative for conflict termination needs to accomplish the fundamental objective of the asymmetric conflict. Acceptability and accomplishment of objectives are not necessarily mutually exclusive. At this stage of an asymmetric conflict, the OPC's leadership is eagerly looking for an exit-strategy, and is more than willing to believe its own distortions and half-truths about the outcome of the conflict. A more serious threat to the asymmetric actor with regard to luring is the opinion and weight of hardliners within the asymmetric actor's own organization.

A second critical requirement is the ability of the CL to take over the leadership from the LLC and to stop scaring activities. This requirement means that the LLC must agree to step aside. Because leaders rarely step aside voluntarily, this step is very difficult for the asymmetric opponent. The persons who have assumed much of risk and who have dedicated their lives to the conflict must abdicate in favor of a civilian leadership that has never participated actively in the conflict.

A third critical requirement is the ability of the CL to be accepted as a leadership by the ethnic, linguistic, or religious minority in which the CL is rooted. However, the LLC should have aimed all its confirming activities at achieving just that end. How can it be viable to change the asymmetric actor's leadership so radically at the end of the conflict?

The solution to the three critical requirements is to incorporate right from the start the separation between the LLC and the CL. The LLC of the asymmetric actor conducts scaring activities and survives according to the rule "what is not expendable has to remain undetectable." The LLC leadership establishes credibility and popular support by

carrying out successful attacks and by conducting scaring activities in general.

Conversely, the CL of the asymmetric actor looks after the civilian needs of the minority in which it is rooted (e.g. education, religion, health care, and social support) and survives under the rule “what is not expendable and cannot remain undetectable has to comply with the conditions that trigger constraints on the use of force.” The CL leadership establishes credibility and popular support by organizing civilian life to the best of its abilities in defiance of the overwhelming power of the OPC. If the OPC chooses to target the CL in spite of constraints on the use of force, the result will likely be increased credibility for the CL. One example of this kind of organization is the militant Palestinian organization Hamas. It has a clearly differentiated military and civilian leadership, and both leaderships are equally credible and acceptable to their followers. A 1993 Congressional Research Service Report states:

It is generally known that the organization is structured along functional lines, with sections dedicated to military, religious, informational, and security activities. . . . Hamas has maintained its status as a religious and charitable organization. Its involvement with educational and social activities qualifies Hamas to receive donations required by Islamic law from the Muslim community (zakat).<sup>9</sup>

It is conceivable for the LLC of Hamas to step aside at the end of the conflict, while the CL of Hamas takes full control.

With respect to luring, the asymmetric actor and the OPC have more in common than one might think. If the asymmetric actor is incapable of creating a CL or simply has not considered the idea, the OPC’s leadership might stimulate the creation of a CL or might set aside a CL just in case. Was it an intelligent Russian move to kill the Chechen leader Maschadov? Should the Turks execute the Kurdish leader Ocalan? Is it better to keep such figures in jail or under surveillance for possible further use, like Mandela?

Luring, because it mitigates or avoids the OPC's defeat, benefits the OPC as much as it benefits the asymmetric actor.

The critical vulnerability regarding luring is the survivability of the CL. The CL does not remain undetectable. On the contrary, it has to advertise its existence and the alternative for which it stands. Hence, it can be destroyed at any time. However, the destruction of the CL does not benefit the OPC and is therefore unlikely. The CL is more vulnerable to destruction by radical elements within the LLC. The real challenge for the asymmetric actor is to foster and retain unity under two separate leaderships and to agree on the alternative that is presented to the OPC in order to shape an exit-strategy. Again, the quality of the leadership of the asymmetric actor and the efficiency of its organization are crucial in dealing with this vulnerability.

The end state that has to be achieved by luring activities with respect to the OPC is the perception within the OPC's PDMM that the CL of the asymmetric actor exists, that it can provide a politically acceptable alternative, and that accepting this alternative will end scaring activities. The end state that has to be achieved by luring activities with respect to the asymmetric actor itself is the acceptance by all organizations and factions within its embrace that the alternative achieves the objectives of the conflict. There also must exist the assurance that, in the event that the OPC's leadership decides to accept the alternative, scaring activities have to cease, the LLC has to disappear, and the CL has to take charge. All these elements combined will shape the OPC's exit-strategy.

#### The Asymmetric Actor's Center of Gravity

The Asymmetric actor's CG is the entity capable of performing all those functions described above. At the strategic level, it is the dual-headed CL and LLC leadership that

is capable of provoking and shaping the OPC exit-strategy. At the operational level, the CG consists of the organizations capable of executing and synchronizing the confirming, converting, scaring and luring activities that make it painful for the OPC to continue the conflict (provoking the exit-strategy) and acceptable for the OPC to end the conflict (shaping the exit-strategy). What these organizations of the asymmetric actor look like and how they are structured can vary widely. A detailed description of the possibilities falls outside the scope of this thesis. However, the examples provided below serve to illustrate some indications and trends.

### Summary of the Center of Gravity Analysis

To clarify what follows below, it is useful to summarize the CG analysis of the OPC (see table 1) and of the asymmetric actor (see table 2).

Table 1. OPC CG Analysis Summary			
CG	CC	CR	CV
Strategic			
PDMM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commit forces</li> <li>• Decide about exit-strategy</li> <li>• Determine legal framework</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Daily majority</li> <li>• Genuine majority at key junctures</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Factors that undermine majority (constraint violations, expectations-reality disconnects, pain-to-gain ratio)</li> </ul>
Operational			
Armed Forces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Detect enemy formations</li> <li>• Destroy enemy formations</li> <li>• Project armed force globally</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Political commitment</li> <li>• Targets</li> <li>• Legitimacy for targets</li> <li>• Intelligence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Factors that terminate political commitment</li> <li>• Constraints on the use of force</li> </ul>
Judicial authorities & security forces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Detect</li> <li>• Arrest</li> <li>• Prosecute</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intelligence</li> <li>• Evidence</li> <li>• Legitimacy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Citizen's rights</li> <li>• Resources</li> </ul>

Table 2. Asymmetric Actor CG Analysis Summary			
CG	CC	CR	CV
Strategic			
LLC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provoke the exit-strategy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Freedom of movement, communication, and action</li> <li>• Popular support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Detection, followed by destruction or arrest and conviction</li> <li>• Discord with CL</li> </ul>
CL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shape the exit-strategy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A politically acceptable alternative</li> <li>• Primacy over the LLC</li> <li>• Constituency</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complicity with LLC in scaring activities</li> <li>• Discord with LLC</li> <li>• Competition with other actors over constituency</li> </ul>
Operational			
Armed Campaigners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Confirm</li> <li>• Convert</li> <li>• Scare</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recruiting base</li> <li>• Organizations capable of carrying out and sustaining scaring activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Detection, followed by destruction or arrest and conviction</li> <li>• Second order effects</li> </ul>
Civilian Organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Confirm</li> <li>• Convert</li> <li>• Lure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organizations capable of organizing daily life in defiance of the OPC</li> <li>• A website and “useful idiots”</li> <li>• An acceptable alternative</li> <li>• Credible primacy over the LLC</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inability to meet expectations with regard to organizing daily life</li> <li>• Internal discord over alternative</li> <li>• Challenges to primacy over the LLC</li> </ul>

### Logical Lines of Operation

This CG analysis of the asymmetric actor facilitates identification of two lines of operations. One line represents confirming and converting activities. These activities seek to align popular opinion and goals with those of the leadership of the asymmetric actor. The second line represents scaring and luring activities. These activities do not seek to change popular opinion. On the contrary, they try to take advantage of what people inside the OPC fear and expect. For graphical reasons, these lines are not depicted as parallel lines, leading towards a common objective, as is the case with Dr. Kem's book. Conversely, they are depicted as intersecting perpendicular axes that lead towards the four end-states described in previous paragraphs. On these lines rests a figurative plane that represents the battlefield for the asymmetric conflict.

For several reasons, the physical terrain (mountains, rivers, ridges, and valleys) is much less important in asymmetric conflict than in other forms of conflict. The first is that globalization offers the asymmetric opponent the ability to exist, move, recruit, communicate, and act wherever he chooses. The second is that possession or occupation of a certain piece of terrain offers the OPC few if any major advantages. Retention of terrain does not enable the OPC to stop scaring activities, because the asymmetric opponent can blend in with the population and can carry out subthreshold actions. Terrain retention does not enable the OPC to cut off the asymmetric opponent from essential resources, because this opponent is capable of carrying out scaring activities using cheap, commercially available products or weapons.

Time also has a significance of its own in asymmetric conflict. Traditionally, when military forces engage in battle, many actions occur simultaneously. Such concepts

as gaining and retaining the initiative, getting into the opponent's decision loop, or overloading the opponent with more problems than he can handle can make the difference between victory and defeat. Conversely, the asymmetric actor avoids engagement in battle, because conventional conflict plays to the OPC's strength. Instead, he seeks to confirm, convert, scare, and lure. Battle rhythm is determined more by discrete rather than by continuous physical actions. Individual actions are followed by flows of information that aim at changing the patterns in which neurons flash from left to right inside the skulls from members of different target audiences. The asymmetric opponent's activities (confirm, convert, scare, lure) all seek to create intellectual and psychological effects rather than physical effects on the earth's surface.

Because of these and other factors, asymmetric conflicts have much in common with turn-based strategy games. For the purpose of this thesis, the "board" for this turn-based strategy game consists of a plane resting on the two above mentioned intersecting perpendicular LOOs (see figure 1). The dual leadership of the asymmetric actor (the civilian leadership and the campaign leadership) lies at the center of the board. This dual leadership is the starting point for the asymmetric campaign. In order to impose its will on the OPC, the dual leadership must "dominate the board" by achieving the four objectives at the extremities of the perpendicular lines of operation. The objectives are those mentioned previously that concern confirming, converting, scaring, and luring activities.



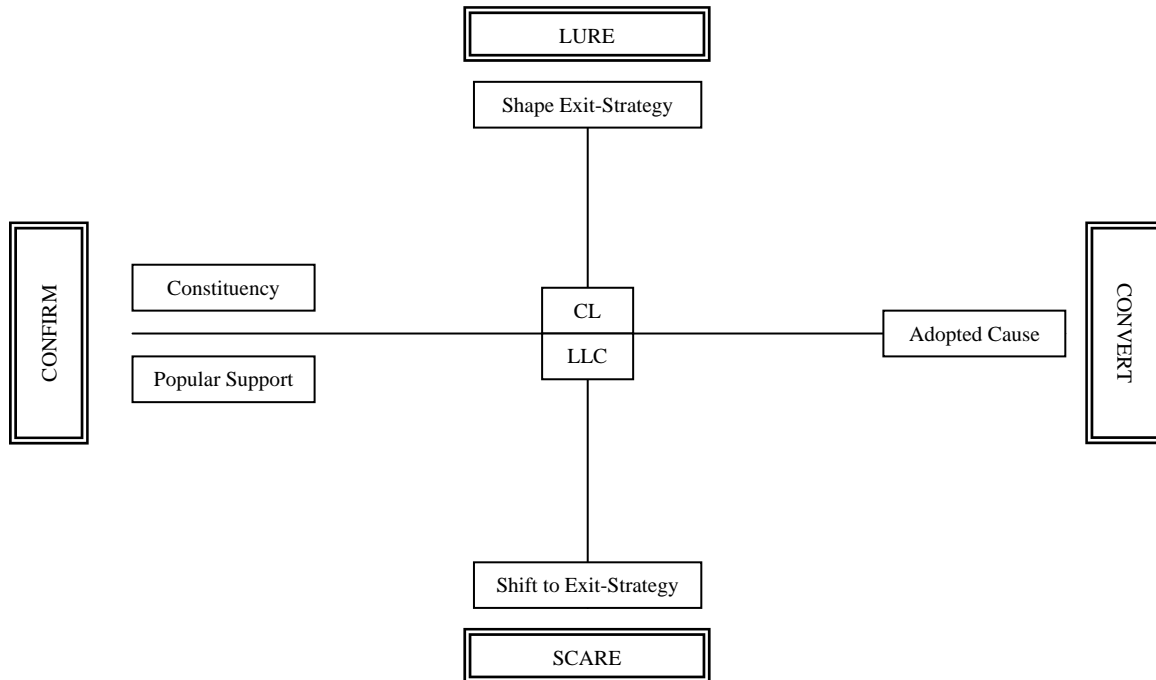


Figure 1. LOOs in an Asymmetric Conflict

## The Asymmetric Campaign Concept

The campaign concept aims at achieving “board domination,” represented by the ellipse that embraces the four objectives (see figure 2). The arrows represent the sequencing and synchronization of actions required to achieve domination. The following paragraphs explain these actions in more detail and illustrate them with examples from recent history.

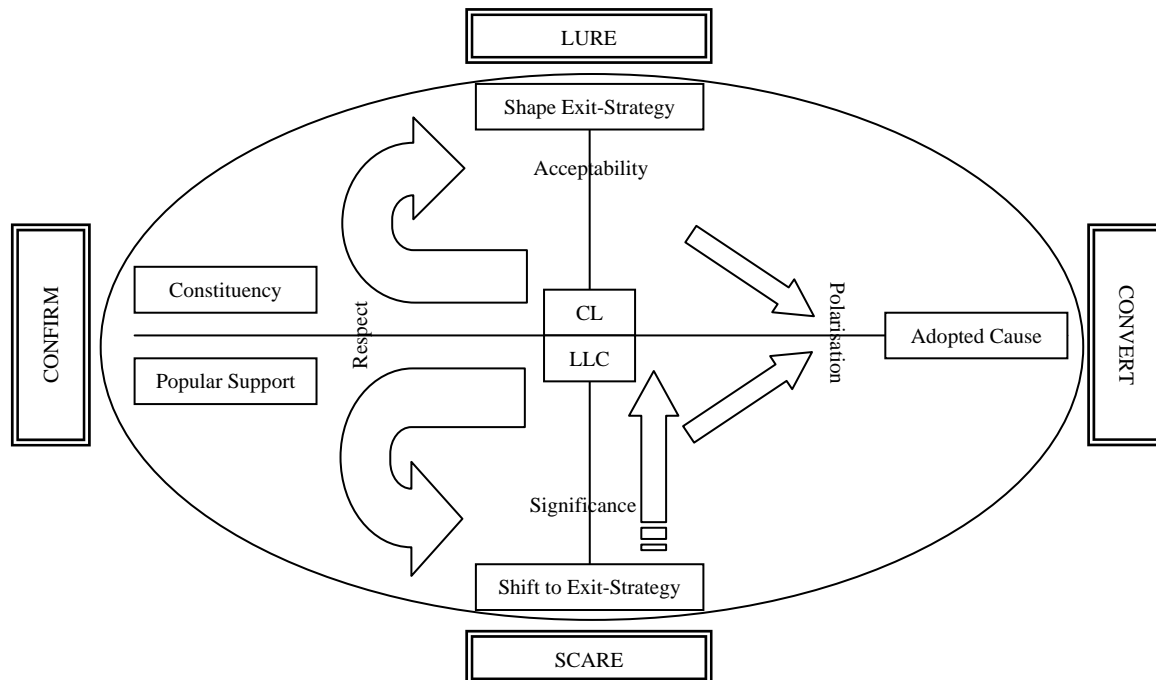


Figure 2. Asymmetric Campaign Concept

### Confirming Activities

The end state of confirming activities is the creation of the perception that the asymmetric actor is the sole representative of the ethnic, linguistic, or religious minority in which it is embedded and upon whose popular support (and recruiting base) the asymmetric campaign relies. Both the CL and the LLC have to gain the respect of their target audience (the minority and the minority in diaspora). Moreover, the CL and LLC have to do this simultaneously, without entering into competition with one another, without overtly identifying with one another (in order to be politically acceptable, the CL has to maintain sufficient distance from the LLC), and without having to enter into competition with other asymmetric actors trying to achieve the same results. This is no easy feat.

The CL must gain the respect of the target audience by organizing daily life in defiance of the OPC. One such example is the late Ibrahim Rugova, the leader of the first non-communist party in Kosovo, the LDK, or Democratic League of Kosovo. He succeeded in organizing “semi-underground elections” and set up “parallel structures of government, health care and education.”<sup>10</sup> These were amazing feats. However, his movement failed to create an LLC for an armed campaign; therefore, Rugova’s movement never achieved the significance necessary to engage the media. This void was filled by the Kosovo Liberation Army, or KLA. The KLA quickly succeeded in attaining significance, but it entered into competition with the LDK during confirming activities. As a consequence, there was no dual CL-LLC leadership, but two leaderships. The LDK, as the CL, could not demonstrate primacy over the KLA as the LLC. Now that hostilities have ended, this situation continues to complicate the transition to normalcy in Kosovo.

Another example is the Palestinian movement Hamas. Hamas possesses the solid dual CL-LLC leadership described above. Its CL “has established charitable funds to establish schools, clinics and hospitals that provide free services to families in distress and has been able to attract millions of dollars from the Gulf and elsewhere.”<sup>11</sup> The CL was headed by the quadriplegic, nearly blind Sheikh Yassin, who could be considered indispensable, but who could not remain undetectable. He was able to survive because he triggered constraints on the use of force as a consequence of his physical weakness and because of the distance he kept from the LLC. However, the secondary effects of the decision by Hamas’ LLC to use suicide bombers as a method in scaring activities diminished these constraints. He was killed by an Israeli missile strike on 22 March 2004. Moreover, Hamas has to compete with the PLO in its confirming activities, and only in

recent elections has Hamas established a genuine constituency among the Palestinian people.

Both examples are apt illustrations of confirming activities. These examples also illustrate the difficulties inherent in achieving the end state of these activities. Gaining sufficient popular support to sustain scaring activities is relatively easy for the LLC. Conversely, it is very difficult for the CL to achieve the constituency that is necessary for luring activities. This capacity rests on popular support, on an attitude of defiant vulnerability, and on a separate, but close coexistence with the LLC.

### Converting Activities

Converting activities aim at winning non-native target audiences over to the asymmetric actor's cause. Converting activities are not new. Lenin called the target audience of converting activities "useful idiots." What is new is that globalization has made converting activities extremely easy. Many well-organized minority groups inside the OPC's territory are well aware of the OPC's leadership's need for the equivalent of a "daily majority." These groups constantly look for issues that can engender polarization or generate sufficient media traction to jeopardize the leadership's "daily majority." Therefore, the asymmetric actor does not have to recruit "useful idiots" actively. As soon as scaring activities become significant, some well-organized minority groups within the OPC will adopt the asymmetric actor's cause to challenge OPC leadership. Traditionally, governments at war used to outlaw these groups and/or censor and even shut down non-confirming media. The emergence of the internet and the unavoidable direct public involvement in the PDMM as a consequence of globalization have resulted in a situation in which the OPC's leadership no longer has the power to act arbitrarily.

The Zapatista movement in Mexico provides a good example of converting activity. A RAND Corporation publication on the subject observes that:

This swarming by a large multitude of militant NGOs in response to a distant upheaval--the first major case anywhere--was no anomaly. It drew on two to three decades of relatively unnoticed organizational and technological changes around the world that meant the information revolution was altering the context and conduct of social conflict. Because of this, the NGOs were able to form into highly networked, loosely coordinated, cross-border coalitions to wage an information-age social netwar that would constrain the Mexican government and assist the EZLN's cause.<sup>12</sup>

One main idea throughout the RAND publication is that militant NGOs are just waiting for issues that rise above the significance threshold. Militant NGOs adopt such an issue very quickly. Therefore, this kind of converting activity has become much easier for the asymmetric actor.

Another kind of converting activity aims at recruiting people outside the actor's minority group to actively participate in scaring activities. This task is much more difficult than simple conversion. The question for the asymmetric actor is whether a more complex version of conversion is worth the trouble. Two kinds of target audiences are suitable for participation in scaring activities. The first audience consists of people who would probably have been recruited by religious sects in the 1970s. They are people who consider the top of Maslow's pyramid more important than its base. One example is the Belgian woman Myriam Degauque, who "converted to Islam after marrying a radical Muslim"<sup>13</sup> and who carried out a suicide bomb attack in Iraq. The inherent value in such converts is that they enjoy a larger freedom of movement in the OPC's territory (although that advantage was not used in Mrs. Degauque's case), and that they increase the scaring potential of the asymmetric actor by demonstrating its global reach and its indifference to territory, boundaries, and lines of communication.

The second target audience for conversion to scaring activities consists of second or third generation immigrants who have integrated in the OPC, but who have ancestral ties with the asymmetric actor's minority. Examples of this phenomenon include perpetrators of the attacks in London on 7 July 2005. According to the BBC News Service, "The four men who carried out the 7 July suicide bombings were young Britons who had led apparently ordinary lives."<sup>14</sup> The inherent value in such converts is that they are easier to convert and that they also can demonstrate the asymmetric actor's global reach and indifference to territory, boundaries, and lines of communication. Additionally, these converts can trigger both OPC restrictive countermeasures and popular antipathy against all second or third generation immigrants. These developments, in turn, will increase the asymmetric actor's recruiting potential even more.

### Scaring and Luring Activities

In order to be effective, scaring and luring activities have to be combined and synchronized. Scaring without luring is useless at best. Many factors have to come together for scaring and luring to be successful. This difficulty explains why good examples are scarce. Perhaps the best available examples are the First Chechen War, which resulted in the Khasavyurt Accords, the first Intifada, which resulted in the Oslo agreements, the recognition of Sinn Fein which led to their introduction in the government of Northern Ireland, and the settlement between the ANC and the government of South Africa, which led to the end of apartheid. However, none of these examples represents a complete success for the asymmetric opponent. Textbook illustrations of this concept still lie in the future.

Now is not the time to focus on the types of scaring activities or tactics involved. This thesis simply assumes that the asymmetric actor is capable of planning and executing such actions as bombing, kidnapping, setting improvised explosive devices, throwing stones at tanks, disrupting the electrical grid, cutting oil and gas lines, sending envelopes with white powder to official buildings, organizing violent demonstrations, and the like. Instead, subsequent focus falls on how an asymmetric actor can link all these actions in such a way to win the conflict.

The nature of victory and defeat in an asymmetric conflict dictates that the ultimate goal of scaring and luring activities is to provoke and to shape the OPC exit strategy. Decisions about the exit strategy are political. Therefore, the first thing the asymmetric actor must accomplish is to achieve significance. He has to earn enough news value for the asymmetric conflict to throw it into the political decision making machine, the PDMM. In principle, no event is too trivial to put the PDMM in motion. In 2005, the disappearance of a single girl in Aruba generated sufficient PDMM attention to make two state governors call for a boycott against the island.<sup>15</sup> With regard to asymmetric conflict, scaring activities can produce significance by increasing cost and suffering for the OPC, thus starting a pain versus gain debate. What pain and gain really mean in an asymmetric conflict is more complicated than one might expect. The complexities are discussed in greater detail below.

In an environment in which asymmetry can thrive, news value can easily equal political value. The reason is that large portions of the electorate do not have an opinion on insignificant issues (see figure 3).

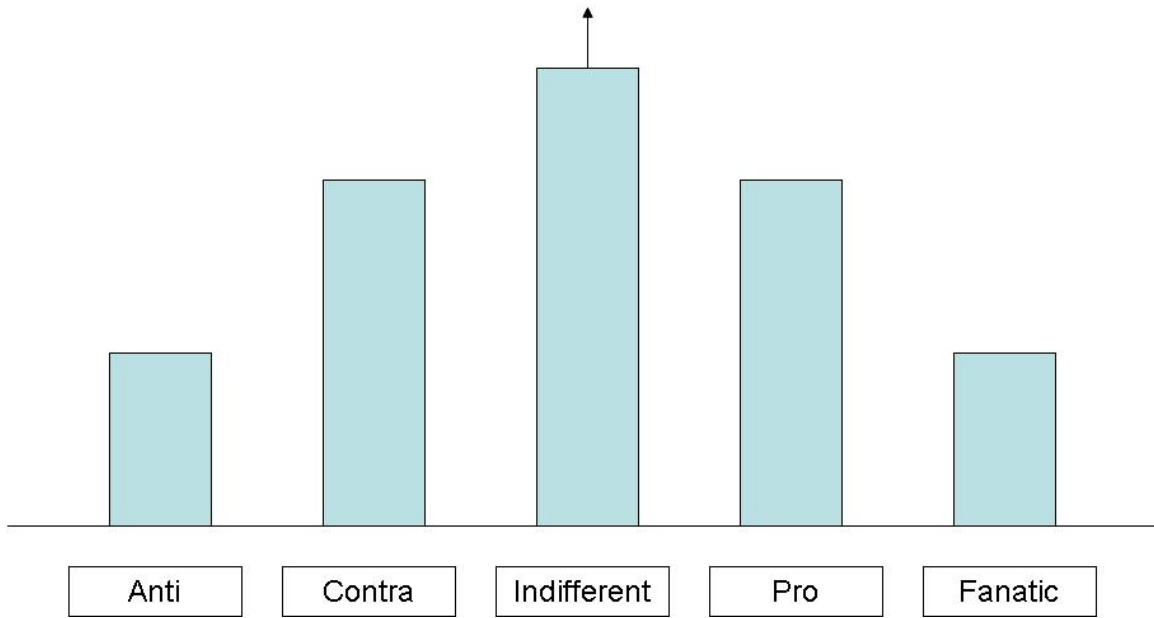


Figure 3. The Electorate's View on an Insignificant Issue

Conversely, if an issue remains above the significance threshold for a long time, interactions within the PDMM can generate polarization (see figure 4).

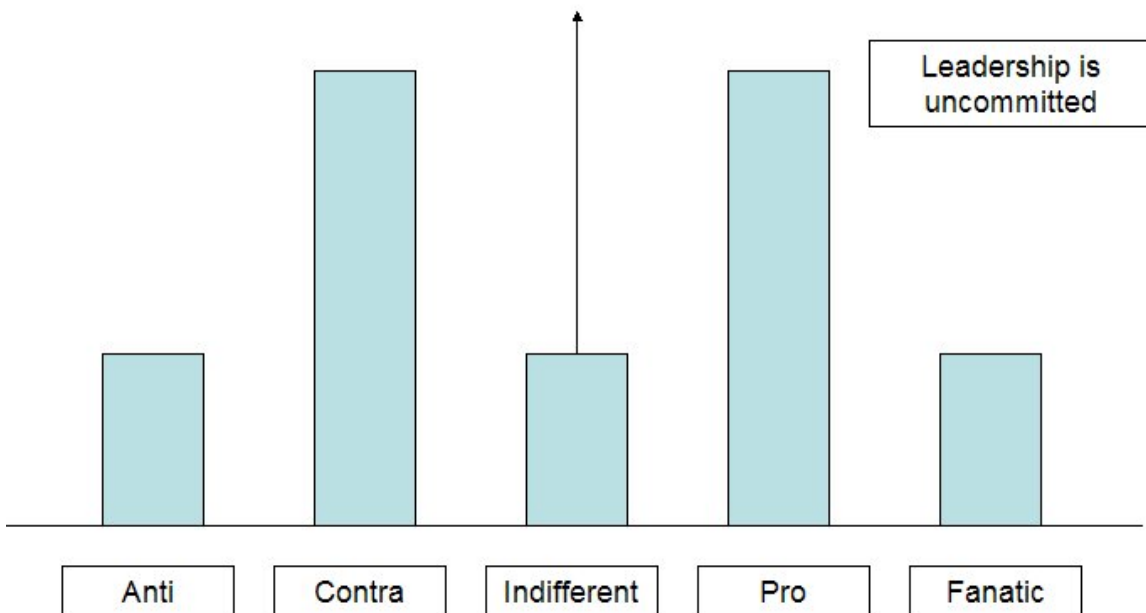


Figure 4. The Electorate's View on a Significant Issue



Generally speaking, the leadership and the opposition are free to position themselves with regard to the polarized issue (see figure 5).

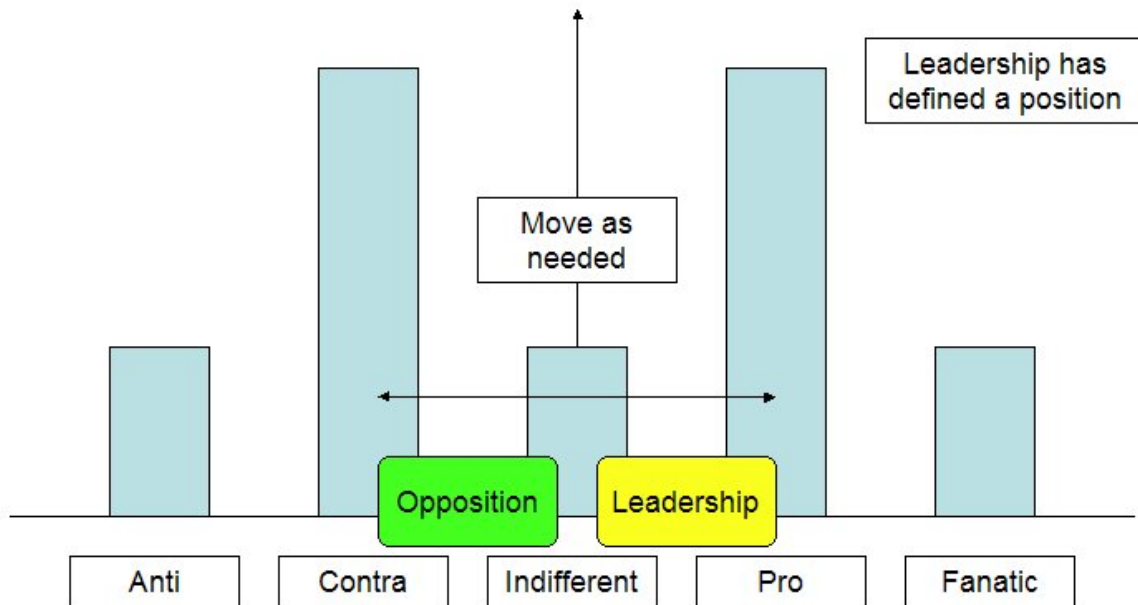


Figure 5. Political Positioning on a Significant Issue

The art of politics in this environment consists, first, of pinning the opponent down on an issue that is so important for him that he cannot adjust his position without losing credibility, and second, of turning this issue into the main theme for the next elections. The asymmetric conflict can fulfill this role. The asymmetric actor has to achieve the situation illustrated in figure 6.

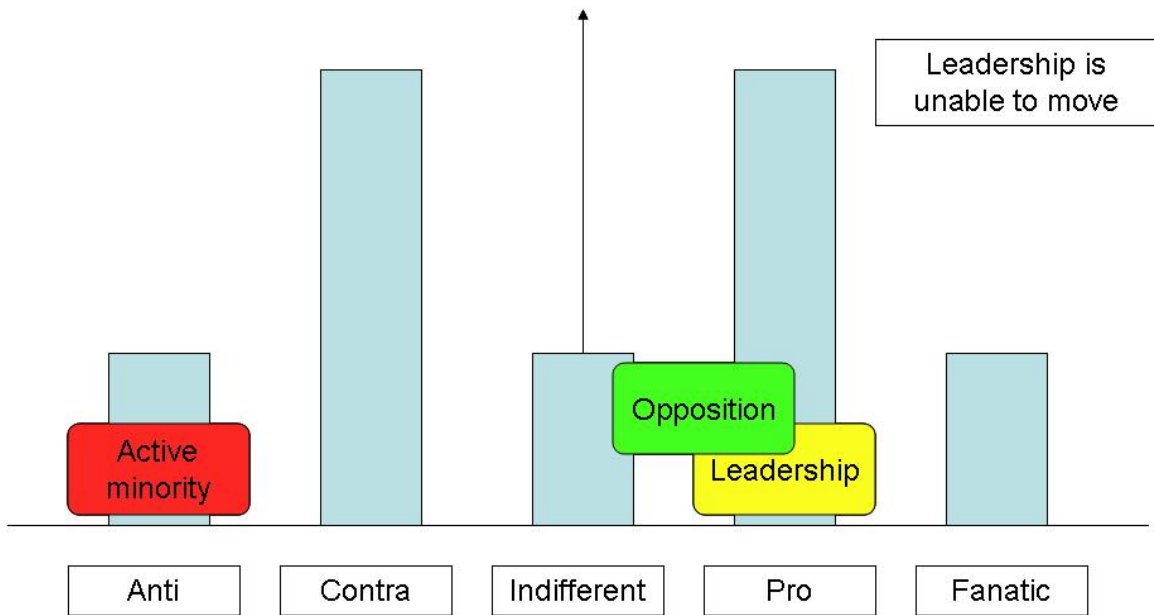


Figure 6. Political Positioning on the Asymmetric Conflict

Scaring actions keep the conflict above the significance threshold. The leadership is deeply involved in the conflict and is unable to adjust its political position on the issue. One or another well-organized minority has adopted the asymmetric cause as a means to challenge the leadership. The media stimulates polarization between the leadership and the well organized minority. The political opposition is free to position itself between the two extremes and does so in order to gain the approval of the majority of the electorate on this issue.

This situation leaves the leadership with limited options. Because it cannot adjust its political position on the asymmetric conflict, the leadership must try to increase popular support for it. The number of people who are “pro” must be increased. However, to do this, the leadership must communicate its intentions and strategy to the electorate. In doing so, the leadership creates expectations. The asymmetric actor can react by

choosing the timing and the place of its scaring activities in such a way that reality differs from expectation. If the asymmetric opponent succeeds, the likely result is decreased rather than increased popular support and more opportunities for the opposition and the well organized minority to capitalize on the issue.

Another option for the leadership is to elevate other issues above the significance threshold. In the era of “infotainment,” there are only so many issues the populace can handle in one day. The leadership can try to saturate the media agenda with other issues. However, the asymmetric actor can react by increasing the frequency or the intensity of his actions to increase the news value of his actions to the point at which they exceed the news value of the leadership’s decoys. Normally, the well-organized minority, and possibly the opposition, will also try to counter leadership attempts to shift the agenda.

A third option for the leadership is to achieve a decisive victory before the next elections. The leadership can increase the resources allocated to the effort. However, pursuit of quick victory increases cost, and cost and suffering are two key components of the pain associated with the conflict. Thus, pursuit of victory over the short term actually increases the pain versus gain ratio, thereby risking the possibility of exceeding an acceptable threshold. Other ways to achieve decisive victory are to diminish constraints on the use of force and/or to extend the legal limits for security forces and judicial authorities. These options, however, increase polarization and, as explained in Chapter 2, lead to diminished popular support for the leadership. If the asymmetric actor survives the OPC’s attempts to achieve a decisive victory in time for the next elections, then this strategy backfires on the OPC’s leadership. Perhaps the best asymmetric reaction to this

strategy is to lie low until a couple of weeks before elections and then to organize a series of scaring activities just before the elections.

Note that it is not necessary to direct the scaring activities against the OPC's armed forces or against its security forces and judicial authorities. Although these organizations constitute the OPC's operational CG, the asymmetric actor simply lacks the power to defeat or to destroy them. However, a CR for the armed forces is continued PDMM commitment. As soon as the PDMM adopts an exit strategy, these armed forces will simply pack and depart. The number of casualties, both on the OPC's side and on the asymmetric actor's side, becomes completely irrelevant. Likewise, it becomes unnecessary to defeat or to destroy the security forces and judicial authorities; their work only needs to be disrupted by exploiting every available loophole in the legal framework for their functioning and by creating a work overload for them. As soon as the PDMM decides an exit strategy, it is irrelevant whether remaining armed campaigners on the OPC's territory are detected, arrested, and convicted. They have served their purpose, and they have to disappear anyway, once the civilian leadership of the asymmetric actor takes over.

The pain to gain ratio is a very important factor in decisions about exit strategies. It is relatively simple to determine the pain. For an OPC the pain consists of costs and suffering. Direct costs involve the financial and material resources needed to wage the campaign. There are also opportunity costs. These include the decrease in power linked to the fact that a very significant part of the armed forces is not available to deter or to threaten other opponents. Suffering includes the number of casualties (killed, wounded and captured), as well as fear and limitations on the freedom of the OPC's citizens as a

consequence of the conflict. Generally speaking, the pain lies in the past and is quantifiable.

Conversely, gain lies in the future and its appreciation is subjective. Additionally, the appreciation of gain has to be multiplied by the perception of its probable attainment. It is important to distinguish three types of gains. The first type of gain is the OPC's objective for the armed conflict (e.g., secure access to cheap raw materials, freedom and justice for all, or security). There is usually little discussion about the value of such objectives. Discussion mostly revolves around the probability of attainment, in other words, the probability of winning the conflict and around the question whether winning the conflict actually leads to realization of the objective. The perception of the probability for attainment generally goes down with the passage of time. The acceptable pain to gain ratio is the amount of pain the electorate is willing to accept to achieve the objective. Not surprisingly, the asymmetric actor can influence the ratio by protracting the conflict and increasing the pain.

The second type of gain is associated with the asymmetric actor's luring activities, or the alternative. The alternative embodies the terms on which he is prepared (or claims to be prepared) to end the conflict. In the course of the conflict the asymmetric opponent can communicate this alternative (e.g., an independent state, another president, no infidels near sacred places, sharia law in every country where there are Muslims) to the OPC. The OPC electorate's perception of gain is determined by the acceptability of the alternative and by the perceived probability that accepting the alternative will end scaring activities. The acceptable pain to gain ratio is the amount of pain the electorate is willing to accept in order to prevent the alternative from happening. Obviously, the

asymmetric actor can influence the ratio by proposing a reasonable alternative and by convincing the electorate that accepting the alternative will end the scaring activities, in short, by combining luring and scaring.

The third type of gain comes into play when winning the conflict becomes an objective in itself. The amount of pain that has been invested in the conflict can reach a degree that makes loss unacceptable. Once this point is reached, both world wars have demonstrated that there is no real upper limit to the pain that an electorate is willing to accept once this point is reached. If this situation occurs, an asymmetric actor inevitably loses the conflict. Therefore, he has to carry out his scaring activities in such a way that this situation does not occur. A careful choice of victims and of the appropriate level of violence is therefore necessary. Another way to avoid or to resolve this potential problem is to sacrifice the LLC at the end of the asymmetric conflict. Even if there has been excessive bloodshed, the electorate's thirst for revenge can be quenched by the arrest, conviction, and even execution of the LLC. Meanwhile, the asymmetric actor's alternative is accepted, and the CL takes over. As noted before, the asymmetric actor can keep this option open by separating the CL and the LLC right from the start and by avoiding complicity between the CL and the LLC in the planning and execution of scaring activities.

The skillful combination and synchronization of scaring and luring activities will result in a situation in which the OPC electorate embraces the second type of pain to gain ratio and pressures the leadership to accept the asymmetric actor's alternative. This turn of events, in combination with a political situation that resembles figure 4, leads to a

provoked and shaped exit strategy. Therefore, the end of the conflict occurs on the asymmetric actor's terms.

### The Chechen Wars

The difference between the first and the Second Chechen Wars illustrates the importance of combining scaring and luring.<sup>16</sup> During the First Chechen War,

in June 1995, in the town of Budyonnovsk, Stavropol, a troop of rebels led by the notorious warlord Shamil Basayev captured a large hospital and took a thousand people hostage. . . . After fighting in which more than a hundred hostages were killed, Basayev and his men were allowed to retreat safely back to Chechnya, and Moscow began peace talks with the rebels.<sup>17</sup>

These peace talks eventually led to the Khasavyurt Accords in August 1996, after which Russian troops withdrew from Chechnya. During the Second Chechen War, in September 2004,

Chechen separatists attacked a school in Beslan, North Ossetia. They took more than 1,100 people hostage. The three-day siege ended in a battle between Russian security forces and Chechen rebels that left more than 330 people, half of them children, dead.”<sup>18</sup>

The responsibility for this action was later claimed by Shamil Basayev, who had also organized the action in Budyonnovsk. However, in contrast with the action at Budyonnovsk, the Beslan action did not achieve any political result. On the contrary, Russian resolve was only strengthened.

The two scaring actions were very similar. They took place in the same region, they were organized by the same person, and the military situation was roughly the same: stalemate between an insurgent and a counterinsurgent. However, the political outcome was totally different. The main differences were in the timing of the actions and the luring activities. The first action took place in a Russian election year; the second one

was not linked to any political deadline. During the First Chechen War, the alternative that the Chechen rebels offered was withdrawal of Russian troops, free elections without interference from Moscow, and negotiations about the final status of the republic. Moscow accepted the Chechen offer in the Khasavyurt Accords. This train of events between Budyonnovsk and Khasavyurt can be considered a good example of a provoked and shaped exit strategy. However, after local elections, the LLC, in the person of Shamil Basayev, refused to accept the primacy of the CL in the person of Aslan Maschadov, the electoral winner. Basayev continued scaring activities, and “with or without the support of President Maschadov, [he] led formations into Dagestan to ignite an Islamic insurgency.”<sup>19</sup> In so doing, Basayev invalidated the luring activities of the First Chechen War. Instead of pursuing the acceptable and face-saving objective of de facto independence and negotiations about the final legal status of the republic, Basayev made it clear that the conflict really was about Islamic dominance of the entire Caucasus. This objective was both politically unacceptable and out of reach for the Chechen regular and irregular forces. In the absence of luring activities, Chechen scaring actions now created only a bloodbath, not results.

#### Course of Action Analysis

The purpose of the third step in campaign method is to determine whether the solution solves the problem. The ends of the asymmetric actor are to provoke and to shape the OPC’s exit strategy. The ways are confirming, converting, scaring, and luring activities. The means can vary according to the peculiarities of the actor and the specifics of the conflict. However, in essence an asymmetric actor uses a dual CL-LLC leadership and separate organizations for scaring, luring, converting, and confirming activities. Is



this solution feasible in terms of ends, ways, and means? And how can feasibility be assessed?

On the basis of past experience, it is possible to conclude that the solution very likely is feasible. The First Intifada and the First Chechen War have proven that it is possible to provoke and shape an OPC exit strategy by a combination of scaring and luring activities. The first Intifada resulted into the Oslo Accords; the First Chechen War resulted in the Khasavyurt Accords. The events in South Africa in 1991 proved that it is possible for the CL to take over from the LLC. This was illustrated dramatically by the differentiation between Winnie and Nelson Mandela. Winnie, who displayed an “ungovernable wildness – with heavy drinking, infidelity and a reign of terror that she imposed in Soweto through a band of thugs, known as ‘Mandela United’”,<sup>20</sup> was representative of the ANC’s LLC. Although she was “a fearless, outspoken opponent of apartheid, and a major political figure in her own right,”<sup>21</sup> Nelson Mandela, as the CL did not hesitate to put her aside. In 1995, Nelson Mandela dismissed her from her ministerial post and divorced her a year later. Though the successful combination of provoking and shaping an OPC strategy on the one hand and a successful takeover of power by the CL on the other hand in the same asymmetric conflict has not yet occurred, the above mentioned examples show that the feasibility question very likely can be answered affirmatively.

The second question, how can the feasibility be assessed, is more important to this thesis and more difficult to answer. This thesis attempts to determine whether a sufficiently feasible asymmetric campaign plan can be produced to constitute a rational course of action against an OPC. Imagine that a small group of people is discontent with

the current state of world affairs and considers changing that state. Before the group initiates action, it chooses a campaign method and produces a campaign concept. Whether or not the group goes ahead with the campaign depends in part on feasibility assessment. To determine the feasibility of the campaign, it is necessary to estimate the chances for success and to recognize its prerequisites. Rationality is key to estimation and recognition, yet a high degree of emotionalism characterizes the causes of potential asymmetric actors. This thesis assumes sufficient cold-blooded rationality to overcome emotionalism. The literature review in Chapter 2 suggests that this assumption is widely agreed upon.

With regard to the OPC, the prerequisites for success can be derived from the analysis above. The OPC must have a PDMM that consists of a leadership, an opposition, a public that participates actively and passively in politics, and a dynamic media. It is easy to recognize these prerequisites. For instance, it is clear that they are absent in China. The people of Tibet have little chance to provoke and shape China's exit strategy from Tibet by scaring, luring, confirming, and converting activities. Therefore, waging an asymmetric campaign against China cannot constitute a rational course of action.

With regard to the asymmetric actor, the prerequisites for success are easy to identify, but difficult to recognize. The prerequisites are a separate CL and LLC with primacy of the former, a target audience for confirming activities, access to that audience, a cause, and an acceptable alternative. For a small group, it is possible, but difficult to recognize these prerequisites before the campaign starts. How much success will that group enjoy in its confirming activities in comparison with other groups? How well will the group organize itself before the campaign starts? What will be the group dynamics

within the dual CL-LLC leadership as conflict drags on, communications between the CL and the LLC become intermittent, dead or captured leaders have been replaced, or other groups start to fish in the same pond? If the organization of the dual CL-LLC leadership does not display mechanisms to ensure the primacy of the CL over the LLC, to designate new leaders in the event of death or capture, and to maintain agreement over the shape of the exit strategy, then this leadership does not comply with the prerequisites for success.

Responses to these prerequisites and the nature of consensus are also dynamic during the course of struggle. Estimation of the chances for success depends on assessment of the quality of the campaign plan and on assessment of the quality of the OPC's plan for dealing with this kind of campaigning. The most critical part of the asymmetric actor's campaign plan is the refinement and synchronization of scaring and luring activities. In theory, these are not difficult tasks. In practice, they demand a very high level of discipline from those who carry out scaring activities on behalf of the asymmetric actor. Because it is so easy to carry out scaring activities with significant media impact, it is better to have a small number of disciplined armed campaigners than a large number of thugs without a clue about the importance of a careful choice of the level of violence and of the timing of the attack. If the campaign plan does not contain measures to refine and synchronize scaring and luring activities, and if it does not impose discipline on armed campaigners, the plan cannot constitute a rational course of action. The scaring activities of the Chechens in the First Chechen War pale by comparison with those carried out by Basajev in the Second Chechen War. However, whereas the First Chechen War led to de facto independence, the Second Chechen War has led only to more Russian resolve and more Chechen suffering. The explanation is that Basajev's

scaring actions were by no means refined, disciplined or synchronized with luring activities. Moreover, the nature of the OPC response has changed as President Vladimir Putin has tightened his grip on the Russian PDMM.

The most critical part of the OPC's plan for dealing with asymmetric campaigning is the OPC interference in luring and confirming activities. Confirming activities are difficult for the asymmetric actor; therefore, it is easy to disrupt them by divide and conquer techniques. Luring activities are also difficult for the asymmetric actor, because the alternative that is central to these activities has to be acceptable to both the OPC and to every major faction within the asymmetric camp. Luring activities can be disrupted by an OPC which accepts the alternative in principle, but which fosters internal divisions in the asymmetric actor's camp during the execution of the alternative. Other OPC actions that can jeopardize the feasibility of the campaign are solid agreement between the leadership and the opposition about the conflict, along with changes in legislation and public acceptance with regard to constraints on the use of force. If the OPC's campaign plan has the strong support of both the leadership and the opposition, and if the public thinks that the outcome of the conflict is important enough to justify low constraints on the use of force, then the asymmetric campaign plan has to incorporate measures to split the OPC leadership from its opposition and to change public perceptions about the outcome of the conflict. If the asymmetric plan incorporates these measures, then it constitutes a rational course of action.

In essence, the above mentioned Campaign Concept is a variation of Delbrück's Ermattungsstrategie (strategy of exhaustion) in which the military component (scaring activities) is one part, but in which the political components (confirming, converting, and

luring activities) are the decisive parts.<sup>22</sup> With reference to figure 2 above, this strategy aims at “board domination.” In achieving board domination, the asymmetric actor has created a situation in which the OPC leadership confronts a Hobson’s choice between losing the elections and losing the conflict AND in which the OPC opposition promises to end the conflict if the elections bring the opposition into power. The assumption is that the OPC’s leadership (either the leadership before the elections, in order to avoid losing the elections OR the opposition after the elections, when it has won these elections) will decide to end the conflict on terms that are favorable to the asymmetric actor.

However, shrewd politicians are masters in dodging dilemmas. For example:

With his popularity at rock bottom in a presidential election year, Boris Yeltsin needed to defuse the war in Chechnya. He negotiated a cease fire in the spring of 1996. When assured of re-election, Yeltsin renewed the fighting.<sup>23</sup>

This example implies that after achieving board domination, success is neither immediate nor guaranteed. Asymmetric actors must be prepared to maintain board domination for a considerable length of time. There are only metrics for the campaign trajectory, not for the progress. It is impossible to predict when the OPC’s leadership will decide to quit, or to discern how close that leadership is to quitting.

### Conclusion

The foregoing analysis, with a focus on the asymmetric conflict, the OPC, and the asymmetric actor, facilitates identification of key concepts within an asymmetric campaign. The central idea is to focus all efforts on the OPC PDMM to provoke and to shape its exit strategy. To achieve this result, the asymmetric actor has to successfully execute and synchronize four types of activities, only one of which involves the use of violence. Each activity is aimed at a particular objective. The overall goal of the

campaign is to force a Hobson's choice on the OPC leadership either to lose power or to lose the asymmetric conflict. Analysis further shows that certain prerequisites must be met for the asymmetric campaign to be feasible. These prerequisites mainly concern the nature of the OPC political apparatus and the organization of the asymmetric actor's leadership. Also, the asymmetric campaign plan must incorporate a number of measures to increase its chances for success. These measures must address synchronizing the four types of activities in a coherent way and must stress avoiding internal discord within the asymmetric actor's leadership.

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<sup>1</sup>R. G. Ratcliff, "Bush toughens his stance on NATO bombing," *The Houston Chronicle*, 9 April 1999 [article on-line]; available from [http://www.chron.com/CDA/archives.mpl?id=1999\\_3130187](http://www.chron.com/CDA/archives.mpl?id=1999_3130187); Internet; accessed 11 January 2006.

<sup>2</sup>David Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice* (St. Petersburg, FL: Hailer Publishing, 2005), 14.

<sup>3</sup>Dr. Joe Strange and Colonel Richard Iron, *Understanding Centers of Gravity and Critical Vulnerabilities* (Maxwell AFB, Alabama: Air War College, 2003) [database on-line]; available from <http://www.au.af.mil.au/awc/awcgate/usmc/cog2.pdf>; Internet; accessed 3 November 2005.

<sup>4</sup>Dick Morris, *The New Prince: Machiavelli Updated for the Twenty-First Century* (New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, 1999), 74.

<sup>5</sup>According to Maslow's theory, human needs are hierarchical. Maslow identified five levels: survival, safety, belonging, esteem, and self-actualization. He presented his theory as a pyramid with five layers. The theory holds that humans only seek to satisfy a higher need if all the lower needs are met. Although this theory seems to be applicable to the majority of people, it fails to explain certain phenomena, like suicide bombers. Suicide bombers seek to satisfy their need for self-actualization by giving up their safety and survival.

<sup>6</sup>Thomas X. Hammes, *Insurgency: Modern Warfare Evolves into a Fourth Generation* (Washington, DC: INSS Strategic forum 214, January 2005), 1.

<sup>7</sup>Lloyd J. Matthews, "Part II: Threats," in *Challenging the United States Symmetrically and Asymmetrically: Can America be Defeated?* ed. Lloyd J. Matthews, (Carlisle, PA: U.S. Army War College, Strategic Studies Institute, 1998), 112.

<sup>8</sup>Galula, 75.

<sup>9</sup>Charles E. Schumer, " Hamas, the Organizations, Goals and Tactics of a Militant Palestinian Organization," Congressional Research Service Report, 1993 [article on-line]; available from <http://www.fas.org/irp/crs/931014-hamas.htm>; Internet; accessed 13 December 2005.

<sup>10</sup>BBC Online Network, "Ibrahim Rugova: Pacifist at the crossroads," *BBC News*, 5 May 1999 [article on-line]; available from [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/special\\_report/1998/Kosovo/110821.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/special_report/1998/Kosovo/110821.stm); Internet; accessed 14 December 2005.

<sup>11</sup>BBC News, "Sheikh Yassin: Spiritual figurehead," *BBC News*, 22 March 2004 [article on-line]; available from [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/in\\_depth/middle\\_east/2001/Israel\\_and\\_the\\_palestinians/profiles/1695470.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/in_depth/middle_east/2001/Israel_and_the_palestinians/profiles/1695470.stm); Internet; accessed 14 December 2005.

<sup>12</sup>David F. Ronfeldt, John Arquilla, Graham E. Fuller, and Melissa Fuller, "The Zapatista Social Netwar in Mexico," RAND Corporation, 1998 [article on-line]; available from <http://www.rand.org/publications/MR/MR994/>; Internet; accessed 16 December 2005.

<sup>13</sup>BBC News, "Belgian 'suicide bomber' is named," *BBC News*, 2 December 2005 [article on-line]; available from <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/4488642.stm>; Internet; accessed 16 December 2005.

<sup>14</sup>BBC News, "The Bombers," *BBC News*, 21 July 2005 [article on-line]; available from [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/shared/spl/hi/uk/05/london\\_blasts/investigation/html/bombers.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/shared/spl/hi/uk/05/london_blasts/investigation/html/bombers.stm); Internet; accessed 16 December.

<sup>15</sup>USA Today, "Georgia governor calls for travel boycott of Aruba," *USA Today*, 15 December 2005 [article on-line]; available from [http://www.usatoday.com/travel/news/2005-12-15-aruba-travel-boycott\\_x.htm](http://www.usatoday.com/travel/news/2005-12-15-aruba-travel-boycott_x.htm); Internet; accessed 11 January 2006.

<sup>16</sup>The following paragraphs use the Chechen Wars, the Palestinian conflict, and the struggle against Apartheid in South Africa as historical examples. These examples put Russia, Israel, and South Africa in the role of the OPC. Although these countries are not really OPCs in the sense of the definition in chapter 1, the beforementioned conflicts are the best available historical analogies for a conflict opposing an OPC and an asymmetric actor.

<sup>17</sup>Pavel Felgenhauer, "Was it just a warning shot?" *Moscow Times*, 31 October 2002 [article on-line]; available from <http://www.cdi.org/Russia/Johnson/6524-1.cfm>; Internet; accessed 12 January 2006.

<sup>18</sup>André de Nesnera, "Basayev, Maskhadov lead Chechen separatists through different paths," *Voice of America*, 13 October 2004 [article on-line]; available from <http://www.cdi.org/Russia/326-9.cfm>; Internet; accessed 12 January 2006.

<sup>19</sup>Lester W. Grau and Dr. Jacob W. Kipp, "Chechen Nationalism and the Tragedy of the Struggle for Independence," *National Strategy Forum Review* (Chicago, IL) 10, no. 1 (autumn 2000): 4.

<sup>20</sup>James Barber, *Mandela's World: The International Dimension of South Africa's Political Revolution, 1990-99* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2004), 69.

<sup>21</sup>*Ibid.*, 69.

<sup>22</sup>Delbrück's Ermattungsstrategie holds that a leadership can choose to attain victory through exhaustion rather than through annihilation of the opponent. In an Ermattungsstrategie violence or battle is only one of the means to reach the political objectives of a conflict. Economic, diplomatic, and political actions and their synchronization with battle are equally important. A leadership can chose for this strategy because of lack of resources or for political reasons. However, it is not a lesser or easier form of warfare.

<sup>23</sup>Grau and Kipp, 3.



## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Conclusions

The purpose of this thesis is to examine whether it is possible to produce an asymmetric campaign concept sufficiently feasible to constitute a rational course of action against an overwhelmingly stronger opponent. Six secondary questions are linked to this research question. First, what is asymmetrical campaigning and what are its key concepts? Second, why does it appear to be new and different? Third, what are the characteristics of the environment in which it can thrive? Fourth, what do victory and defeat really mean in an asymmetric context? Fifth, how can an asymmetric opponent realize conditions to impose his will upon the OPC in an asymmetric campaign? Finally, how can the feasibility of an asymmetric campaign plan be assessed? All these questions can be answered on the basis of research and analysis.

This thesis started with the observation that, after Operation Desert Storm in 1991 no future adversary would consciously choose to fight an overwhelmingly powerful country (OPC) in a conventional manner. In itself this observation means nothing. Its implications can encompass anything from everlasting world peace, because resistance has convincingly become futile, to a new wave of organized violence, albeit in a totally different form.

Many of the materials that were examined in the literature review anticipate the latter variant. They point out that opponents will simply take note of the fact that it is impossible to defeat an OPC militarily. These opponents will look for other defeat

mechanisms to impose their will on an OPC. In other words, they will employ asymmetric methods. Instead of opposing military forces, an asymmetric actor can disrupt the commitment of those forces. Two concepts are key to disruption: constraints on the use of violence by the OPC and the choice of the OPC's electorate to accept or decline the global responsibilities that the OPC leadership has identified. Despite the OPC's overwhelming power, the former concept provides opportunities for the asymmetric opponent to exist, move, act and communicate. The latter concept provides an entry point for the asymmetric actor to erode the OPC's resolve for continuing the conflict. Therefore, asymmetric campaigning can be defined as waging a campaign in such a manner intended to offset the strength of the OPC by operating below his detection threshold, by exploiting his liabilities and constraints on the use of force, and by not accepting any such constraints on one's own actions.

Definition of asymmetric campaigning and identification of its key concepts provide only part of the answer. These initial steps explain the likely intentions of future opponents, but they fail to explain why this approach was not tried earlier than 1991. In other words, definition and identification fail to explain why asymmetry is new and different. One explanation is that asymmetry is not new at all. Armies have always tried to avoid their opponents' strengths and exploit weaknesses. However, the literature on globalization indicates that something else is new and different. A revolution in transportation and communication technologies has created a situation in which it is possible and affordable to reach any major city in the world within a day, and in which it is possible to communicate without limitations inherent in distance, bandwidth, cost, or censorship.

This revolution in transportation and communications has fundamentally changed the nature of immigration. The number of immigrants has increased and globalization has made the process of integration avoidable and reversible, thus creating pockets, or diasporas, of various cultures all over the world. As a consequence, Mao's fish now might find a comfortable pond or lake in every city in the world. This development gives asymmetric actors a global reach.

Another consequence of the revolution in transportation and communications is the changing context within which democracy works. In an age of 24-hour news channels and internet polls, it has become impossible to avoid direct and constant public interference in the political decision making machine (PDMM). The word "mandate" has now lost much of its substance. Instead, the leadership needs Dick Morris' "daily majority" to stay in business. Furthermore, small, active, and well-organized minorities can have a disproportionate influence on the decision making process. Nuances associated with these developments give the asymmetric actor opportunities to influence the way the PDMM functions. The same nuances enable the asymmetric actor to provoke and shape decisions about the conduct of a conflict.

In summary, asymmetry is neither new nor different, but the environment in which it can thrive is. This environment affords freedom for the asymmetric actor to exist, move, act, and communicate, despite overwhelming OPC power. New elements within the environment enable the asymmetric actor to influence the PDMM about the outcome of the conflict via the public's unavoidable, direct, and constant interference in the PDMM.

These assertions notwithstanding, a literature review of asymmetry and globalization and their consequences is in itself insufficient to develop an asymmetric campaign concept. Further analysis must extend to the asymmetric actor, the OPC, and to the nature of the asymmetric conflict itself.

The first question about an asymmetric conflict is what victory and defeat really mean in an asymmetric context. Analysis shows that from the asymmetric actor's perspective victory means provoking and shaping the OPC's exit strategy. For the OPC, defeat is not the opposite of victory in an asymmetric context. On the contrary, the OPC leadership will be more inclined to opt for an exit strategy if the asymmetric actor provides it with a politically acceptable and face-saving alternative.

Analysis shows that the OPC's operational CGs are his armed forces abroad and his own domestic security forces and judicial authorities. The CVs of the armed forces are continued political commitment and constraints on the use of violence. The CVs of the security forces and judicial authorities are their resources and the legal framework that governs and limits their work. The PDMM makes decisions about the start and end of the conflict and about the CVs of the armed forces and of the judicial authorities and security forces. Therefore, the PDMM is the OPC CG at the strategic level. The CV of the PDMM is the "daily majority" it needs to stay in business.

Analysis of the asymmetric actor is more complex and more difficult to summarize. The analysis takes into account the fact that an asymmetric actor starts from scratch. Initially the asymmetric actor can be as small as the proverbial dozen angry men. In order to win a conflict against an OPC, the asymmetric actor has to confirm himself as the representative entity of an ethnic, linguistic or religious minority with sufficient

popular support to wage a violent campaign. He has to convert at least one active, well organized minority within the OPC to stir up the PDMM. He has to scare the electorate of the PDMM in order to make the electorate long for an end to conflict, thus creating political momentum towards an exit strategy. Finally, the asymmetric actor has to lure the electorate, the opposition, and/or the leadership of the OPC into accepting a face-saving alternative by creating the perception that acceptance of the alternative will result in the end of scaring activities. Analysis shows that the combination of scaring and luring activities requires a dual leadership: a civilian leadership (CL) that organizes daily life of the asymmetric actor's minority in defiance of the OPC and a leadership that leads the armed campaign (LLC). This dual leadership constitutes the strategic CG of the asymmetric actor. In order to make luring credible, the LLC has to abstain from overt participation in the use of violence and has to demonstrate the primacy of the CL over the LLC. The CVs of the LLC are detection followed by destruction. The CVs of the CL are competition with other actors over representation and credibility, complicity with the LLC in scaring activities, and discord with the LLC. Of the four crucial activities - scare, lure, confirm, and convert - the luring and confirming activities are the most difficult for the asymmetric actor to execute.

The asymmetric actor's campaign concept is based on the careful combining and synchronization of confirming, converting, scaring, and luring activities. All these activities must lead to the simultaneous achievement of four objectives. First, the confirming activities must produce a situation in which the asymmetric actor has a dual CL-LLC leadership with the demonstrated primacy of the CL. The CL and the LLC must achieve representation and credibility and a degree of popular support unchallenged by

other actors. Second, converting activities must lead to the adoption of the asymmetric actor's cause by at least one active, well-organized minority within the OPC. Third, scaring activities must create a situation in which the media represent the conflict as the predominant political issue, in which the electorate thinks that the pain is not worth the gain, in which the domestic opposition is less belligerent than the leadership, and in which the leadership does not have a credible strategy to end scaring activities before the next elections. Fourth, the luring activities must result in a situation in which the CL has an alternative that is acceptable to both the OPC and to the LLC and in which the OPC thinks that acceptance of the alternative will lead to the end of scaring activities and the disappearance of the LLC. With reference to figure 2 above, this situation is called "board domination." Board domination means the leadership must choose between losing the elections and losing the conflict AND the OPC's domestic opposition promises to end the conflict if the elections put it into power. The assumption is that the OPC's leadership (either the leadership before the elections, in order to avoid losing the elections OR the opposition after the elections, when it has won these elections) will decide to end the conflict on terms that are favorable to the asymmetric actor. In other words, this series of considerations demonstrates how an asymmetric actor can realize the conditions that enable him to impose his will upon the OPC.

Assessment of the feasibility of the campaign concept has resulted in the identification of both prerequisites for success and of factors that influence chances for success of the campaign concept. With regard to the OPC, the prerequisites for success are a PDMM that consists of a leadership, an opposition, a public that participates actively and passively in politics, and a dynamic media. It is easy to recognize these

prerequisites. For instance, they are clearly absent in China. With regard to the asymmetric actor, the prerequisites for success are a separate CL and LLC, a target audience for confirming activities, access to that audience, a cause, an acceptable alternative, and primacy of the CL over the LLC.

The factors that influence the chances for success are conditioned by the understanding that each opponent in the conflict influences the outcome of this conflict. The OPC can disrupt confirming activities by divide and conquer techniques. Luring activities can be disrupted by an OPC which accepts the alternative in principle, but which creates internal divisions between the asymmetric actor's CL and LLC during execution of the alternative. Solid agreement within the OPC's leadership and opposition about the conflict and a high public tolerance for violations of constraints on the use of force can also decrease the asymmetric actor's chances for success. The most critical part of the asymmetric actor's campaign plan is the refinement and synchronization of scaring and luring activities. Precision and timing require a very high level of discipline from the people who carry out scaring activities on behalf of the asymmetric actor. The armed campaigners must understand the importance of a careful choice of the level of violence, of the timing of attacks, and of the need to accept CL primacy over the LLC. The campaign concept has to display measures to refine and synchronize scaring and luring activities and to enforce discipline on the armed campaigners.

The analysis described above makes it possible to answer the primary research question. It is possible to produce an asymmetric campaign concept sufficiently feasible to constitute a rational course of action against an overwhelmingly stronger opponent, provided that the asymmetric actor takes into account the prerequisites for success, and

provided that he adopts the necessary measures to increase his chances for success, as discussed above.

### Recommendations

Many publications identify “the will to fight,” the “national will” or “resolve” as central issues in an asymmetric conflict. However, few if any publications try to explain from the asymmetric actor’s perspective how it is possible to design and execute a campaign that leads to the OPC’s loss of resolve to continue the fight and to win the conflict. This thesis is intended to do just that.

The significance of this thesis is twofold. First, it demonstrates that an asymmetric actor using actions that can be defined as terrorism is not necessarily a lunatic whose sole aim is to shed as much blood as possible. Conversely, it is possible that he knows exactly what he has to do and how to do it. Secondly, this thesis outlines the campaign concept that such an actor has to fashion for success. The thesis also identifies the strengths and the weaknesses associated with this concept. As such, this campaign concept can serve as a point of departure for developing better ways to counter asymmetric opponents. In the end, this thesis builds on earlier counterinsurgency-oriented theories, beginning with Trinquier and Galula, to consider the impact of globalization and recent experience on the evolution of asymmetric conflict. Throughout, the governing principle has been the enduring significance of Clausewitz’s dictum about war as an extension of politics.

As suggestion for further research, this campaign concept might find application as an assessment tool to determine whether current counterinsurgency and counterterrorism strategies can be improved. Are these strategies sufficiently reflective of the fact that confirming and luring activities are very difficult for the asymmetric actor?



Do these strategies embody adequate measures to assure solid agreement between the OPC's leadership and its opposition about ends, ways, and means, or do these strategies simply ignore consonance, allowing free and reckless exploitation of differences for electoral gain? The campaign concept developed in this thesis invites additional research into these and related questions.

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